Mr. Midshipman Hornblower

C S FORESTER

NEW METHOD SUPPLEMENTARY READER STAGE 4

MR MIDSHIPMAN HORNBLOWER

by

C. S. FORESTER

Adapted and brought within the vocabulary of New Method Reader 4 (Alternative Edition)

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On pages 48–49 there is a picture of a ship of war belonging to the time of MR MIDSHIPMAN HORNBLOWER. It shows the different parts described in the story.

One

THE SUPPLY-SHIP

A. It was the year 1793, and Britain and France were at war. Both countries knew that sea power was very important: among other things, merchant ships carrying necessary food supplies had to be protected. Thus the warships of the French and British *navies* were fighting for power at sea; they were also trying to stop supplies from reaching the other country.

At this time, a young man named Horatio Hornblower joined the British navy as a *midshipman*—the rank given to a young man being trained to become an officer in the navy. Hornblower was seventeen years old when he began his service in the Fearless, a warship under the command of Captain Sir Edward Pellew.

B. In the Bay of Biscay there were some French supply-ships carrying food to France. The French warships were far away in the Atlantic fighting the British navy, so the merchant ships were not protected. They were slow ships, with few or no guns on them, and helpless against a warship like the Fearless, which suddenly appeared in the Bay of Biscay. One by one each supply-ship was forced to turn into the wind as Captain Pellew came up to cut off the way of escape to the open sea. After one or two shots from the Fearless, the French flag was quickly brought down. Captain Pellew sent an officer and a few men from the Fearless to take charge of the supply-ship and sail her to England. Then the Fearless hurried on to

the next supply-ship. Captain Pellew could see that the remaining merchant ships were beginning to spread, to get farther apart: they would escape if any time was wasted.

One of the ships was slow to bring down the French flag.

"Very well," said Pellew angrily. "He has asked for it. Let him have it."

The men at the gun changed their point of aim, firing at the ship instead of across her *bows*, that is, in front of her. One shot hit the ship dangerously near the *waterline*, the line on a ship just above the water.

"Not there!" shouted Pellew. "Aim at the *mast*."

The sails of a ship are supported by cross pieces, called *yards*, that are hung across the masts. The next shot from the Fearless hit a yard, causing it to fall sideways so that the French ship swung round close to the Fearless and all the guns on one side of the Fearless could fire into her. The flag of the French ship came down.

C. "What ship is that?" shouted Pellew.

"The Marie Galante, from Bordeaux, carrying food grain," was the answer.

Captain Pellew said, "There will be twelve sailors there. So it will need four of our men to take charge of her, with a midshipman in command... Mr Hornblower!"

"Sir!"

"Take four men. Bring that ship into any English port which you can reach. Mr Soames will give you your position on the map."

"*Aye aye*, sir." Sailors on a ship always say "aye aye" instead of "yes" in answer to an order.

There was not time for Hornblower to get his box of

clothes and other possessions. He ran to the side and called to the ship's boat.

Soames handed him a paper giving his position. Then Hornblower climbed down the side of the ship. The boat was going up and down on the waves. He had to jump down into it. The men in the boat and all the men on the ship were watching him. A wave lifted up the boat. Hornblower jumped. His feet touched the side of the boat: a seaman seized the front of his coat and pulled him forward. He fell on one of the other men in the boat.

"I'm sorry," he said to the man on whom he had fallen.

"That's all right, sir."

D. There was an officer in the boat. Hornblower went to the *stern* of the boat and said, "Will you go to the French ship, please, sir?"

The officer shouted an order to the French ship.

"Are you taking charge of the ship?"

"Yes, sir. The captain told me to take four of your men."

The officer looked up at the French ship with the yard and sail hanging down. "You'll need good men who can deal with that. Shall I pick them for you?"

"Thank you, sir."

The officer shouted four names.

"Keep these men away from drink and they will be all right. Watch the Frenchmen. They'll take over the ship from you if they get the chance, and then you will find yourself in a French prison."

The boat came to the side of the French ship. One man sprang up and caught the *rope ladder* hanging down the side. Another man followed him and they stood and

Hornblower jumped

waited. Hornblower made his way with difficulty forward on the boat. He stood there. One of the seamen put an arm on his shoulder.

"Wait for it, sir," he said. "Get ready. . . . Now jump, sir."

Hornblower threw himself upwards, all arms and legs like a frog. His hands reached the rope ladder, but his knees did not. The ship rolled and lowered him into the sea. The waiting seaman seized his arms and pulled him up. Two more seamen followed. He led the way on the *deck.*

E. The first thing Hornblower saw was a man sitting with his head thrown back holding a bottle to his mouth with the bottom pointing straight up to the sky. Others were sitting round with more bottles. One bottle was passed by one man to another. An empty bottle rolled past Hornblower's feet.

One man stood up to welcome him. He stood there for a moment with waving arms and rolling eyes. "Bah! You English!" Then he sat down suddenly, then lay down to sleep with his head on his arm.

There was a box full of bottles. One of Hornblower's men picked out a bottle and looked at it. Hornblower remembered what the officer had said. His men would soon be as drunk as the Frenchmen if he allowed it.

"Put that down!" he ordered. He put his hand on the pistol at his side. "Put it down, do you hear me!" He remembered afterwards that the pistol had been in the water and was useless; but the seaman put the bottle back in the case.

"Take those men and shut them up below."

"Aye aye, sir."

Three of the Frenchmen were pulled along the deck: the others were still able to walk.

One man who was being pulled along broke away and turned back to Hornblower.

"I am an officer. I will not go with them."

"Take him away," said Hornblower.

He pulled the case of bottles down to the ship's side and threw the bottles two by two over into the sea.

F. There was no-one at the wheel to guide, or *steer*, the ship: it swung this way and that. The yard hanging down from the mast might tear itself free and fall. He went to the wheel and turned the ship into the wind so that the sails were empty. Then he fixed the wheel in position with a rope. The ship was riding quietly and comfortably.

He looked up at the mast, at the hanging yard and the loose *rigging*. He did not know what to do about that; but the seamen under his command would know—they must have dealt with such a thing many times.

He turned to the men and said, "Who is the oldest seaman among you?"

"Matthews, sir," said someone. Matthews was the man onto whom he had fallen in the boat.

"Well, Matthews, I'll put you in charge. Get to work and clear away all that stuff."

"Aye aye, sir."

Hornblower went to the stern of the ship. He looked round to see what other ships were near. There were a few ships in sight. The nearest ones were the French supply-ships which were being sailed away to England as fast as they could go. Further away he could see the sails of the Fearless as she hurried after the rest of the French ships. She had already taken all the slower ships;

so now she was following the faster ships and each pursuit would be longer. Soon he would be alone on this wide sea, three hundred miles from England. Three hundred miles! Two days if the wind was right; but how long if it was not?

G. The men were hard at work under Matthews; so Hornblower went below. He looked round the *cabins*, the small rooms where people sleep on a ship; there were two single cabins, for the captain and his second in command, and a larger one for two of the other men. He found the store-room. The door was swinging to and fro with the keys in it. The French captain had left the door open when he took the case of wine. Hornblower shut it and took the keys.

He went up on deck. Matthews hurried up to him.

"Sir, we'll need more men than we have to do this. Can I put some of those Frenchmen to work?"

"Do you think you can put them to work?" asked Hornblower. "They are very drunk."

"I think I can, sir, whether they are drunk or not."

"Very well."

Just at this moment Hornblower remembered that the powder in his pistol must have got wet when he fell into the sea. He was very angry with himself for not re-loading it. He went down again to the captain's cabin. He remembered seeing a case of two pistols there with powder and shot for loading them. He hurried down to the captain's cabin, loaded the two pistols and re-loaded his own. Then he came up on deck just as Matthews and his men appeared bringing six Frenchmen.

H. After half an hour's hard work the yard was fixed up again in its place. Just as the work was nearly finished

he remembered that he must *set a course*, that is, he must say in what direction the ship should sail. He went down to the captain's cabin and spread out the map. He took from his pocket the paper which Soames had given him telling the position of the Fearless. He worked out what his course should be and wrote it on a piece of paper fearing that he might forget it.

When he went up on deck, the sail had been set, and Matthews looked to him for further orders.

"Send a man to the wheel," he said. "Steer north-east by north."

"North-east by north, sir," said the man and the Marie Galante began to sail towards England.

Night was coming on. He looked round: not a sail was in sight; but there must be plenty of ships farther away in the growing darkness. He felt so much alone, and there was so much to do. The prisoners must be shut in below. A man must be put on watch. He must light the lamp. There was one man at the wheel. Two men were getting some sleep. He had a hasty meal. Then he walked up and down on the deck in the darkness.

"Why don't you get some sleep, sir?" asked the man at the wheel.

"I will—later, Hunter," said Hornblower. He knew that it was good advice. He went and lay down on the captain's bed, but of course he could not sleep. After some time he heard the man *on watch* shout down, calling to the man below to take over from him. He got up and went on deck. He found Matthews in charge and told himself he ought not to be anxious; so he forced himself to go and lie down.

I. Suddenly a thought came to Hornblower which made

him jump up. His skin was cold with anxiety: "Oh, what a fool! What a fool I am!" He ran up on deck and went to the place where Matthews was sitting.

"Nothing has been done to see if water is coming in at that place where the first shot from the Fearless hit this ship."

"That is true, sir," said Matthews.

"We must look as soon as it is light. And we must find out now if there is water in the bottom of the ship."

"Aye aye, sir. I'll get a lamp."

There was a *pump*, used to draw up water from the bottom of the ship, and near it there was a thin rope with a long iron bar on the end. This could be let down to the bottom of the ship so as to discover how much water there was in the bottom. Hornblower put the bar into the opening, then remembered to dry it. So he took it out again. He then let it fall till he heard it strike the ship's bottom. He pulled it out again and Matthews held the lamp so that he could examine it.

"Not a drop, sir! It's quite dry!"

Hornblower was pleasantly surprised. In every ship some water comes in and in the Fearless pumping was necessary every day.

"Hm!" he said. "Very good."

He went below to get some sleep, but soon the wind changed. Matthews came and knocked on the door.

"We can't keep the course which you set much longer. The wind has changed and is getting stronger."

J. "I'll come up," said Hornblower. "Call all the men." With so few men he dare not be taken by surprise by the weather. But nothing could be done in a hurry. He took the wheel while the four men worked at bringing in the

sails. The work took half the night. When it was done Hornblower gave up the wheel and went below to look again at the map. With the wind in this direction he could not get round Ushant, the north-west point of France. The ship would be blown onto the land. He must turn round and go back.

He returned sadly to the deck and called the men. They turned the ship. Now they were going away from the dangerous shore of France, but also away from England.

Early next morning the French captain asked to see Hornblower. He came up on deck and said, "My men are hungry."

"So are my men," said Hornblower.

"I have a cook," said the captain.

"We must make an arrangement. Your men will be allowed to come up on deck and your cook will provide food for all—for my men and your men. This will continue till mid-day. I must have your promise that there will be no attempt to take the ship. Is that agreed?"

"Yes: it is agreed."

Hornblower gave the necessary orders. Soon smoke was coming up from the chimney of the cook-house.

The captain looked up at the grey sky. He looked at the *compass*.

"This is a bad wind for England," he said.

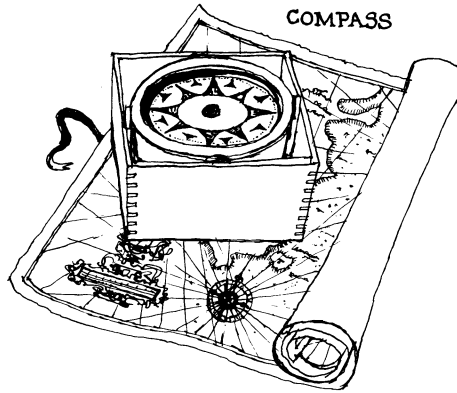
"Yes."

"The ship is moving rather heavily," said the French captain.

"Perhaps," said Hornblower. He did not know this ship; he did not know any ship except the Fearless, but he did not want the Frenchman to know this.

"Is the water coming in?" asked the captain.

"There is no water in her."



K. "Ah!" said the captain. "You would not find any water. You must remember that we are carrying grain, food-grain—*rice*. Ah, you do not eat much rice in England, so you do not know how rice behaves. It takes in the water and swells."

Hornblower understood. "Yes," he said.

"So," said the French captain, "you would not find any water in the bottom of the ship. No! The bottom would be dry, but the water would be in the rice.

"Yes," said Hornblower.

"One shot from your ship struck this ship. Where did it hit?" asked the Frenchman.

"Somewhere on this side."

Hornblower and Matthews looked down over the side.

"I can't see anything, sir. Lower me over the side on a rope and I'll see what I can find."

"I'll go over the side myself," said Hornblower.

Soon he was hanging over the ship's side with the sea just below him. As the ship rolled, the sea came up to meet him and he was wet half-way up his body. Then, as

the ship rolled the other way he was swung out from the side; then, again, he swung back to hit it. The men with the rope walked steadily along giving him a chance to examine the whole side of the ship above water. He could not see any shot-hole.

They pulled him up onto the deck.

"Then it's below the water-line," said Matthews.

"We'll turn the ship so that the wind will push her over towards the other side, and the shot-hole will not be below the water."

They lowered him again and walked slowly along. Then he found what he was looking for.

"Lower! Let me down about two feet." As the ship rolled the water closed for a moment over his head. Here was the hole—two feet below the water-line. It was about one foot across. He thought that he could even hear the water running into the ship.

He ordered the men to pull him up, and they stood listening eagerly to what he had to say.

"Yes," said Matthews, "she was lying over toward the other side when the shot hit her. And, of course, she's lower in the water now."

"And the lower the ship goes in the water, the more water will come in. We must make a roll of sail-cloth, lower it below the ship's bottom, then pull it up against the hole, and the water will press it in. Those Frenchmen must help."

L. The Frenchmen did not work quickly. It was no longer their ship and they were being taken to an English prison.

"I was five years in a prison-ship in the last war," said the captain. "Five years!"

"Yes," said Hornblower. He might have felt sorry for the French captain but he had too much to think about. He was wet and very cold. He meant, if possible, to take the French captain to England and prison again; but now he must go down and get into some dry clothes—some of the French captain's clothes.

Down below Hornblower noticed that the usual noises of a wooden ship at sea were louder than usual. The ship was not moving forward, but the noises were as loud as they would be if the ship was shaking herself to pieces in a storm. He told himself that this was only his imagination, but when he had dried himself and put on the captain's best suit, the idea returned to him.

He came up on deck again to see how the work was getting on. One of the Frenchmen bent down to pick up another piece of rope: he stopped and looked at the deck; then he looked up at Hornblower and pointed. The crack between the wooden boards of the deck was opening a little. The French captain was at his side, looking at the deck.

"My God!" he said. "The rice! The water has got into the rice and it is swelling."

Matthews was with them now. He did not understand French, but he understood what was happening. Dry rice in water would become double or three times its size. Hornblower remembered those noises which he had heard below.

"The sooner we get that sail over the hole, the less water will come in."

M. Hornblower turned to walk along the deck so as to calm his feelings and think what else he could do. Even as

he stood for a moment there was a sudden feeling under his feet, as if someone had hit the deck from below with a hammer. The ship was coming apart, piece by piece.

"Hurry up with that sail!" he shouted as he turned back to the working party.

At last the sail was ready and the men went forward to pull it under the ship and draw it back to the hole. Hornblower was taking off his clothes. He said to Matthews, "I'll go over and see that the sail is in place."

He was rubbed against the ship's side as she rolled, and the waves passing down the ship hit him. But he saw the sail placed against the hole. He saw it pushed into the hole by the pressure of the water, and he could be sure that the hole was stopped up.

The men pulled him up again.

"Turn the ship about—change course for England," he ordered.

If the ship was going to sink it did not matter if it was one hundred or two hundred miles from the French coast; and, if she didn't sink, he wanted to be a long way away from France and the chance of being taken back by the French.

The French captain saw that the ship was being turned. "But, with this wind we could easily reach Bordeaux in the other direction. You are putting all our lives in danger."

"Go to the devil!" Hornblower said as he pulled the Frenchman's thick shirt over his head.

As his head came out of the shirt the Frenchman was still speaking very angrily—so angrily that a new doubt came into Hornblower's mind. He called Matthews.

"Search all the French prisoners. Take away their

knives." Then he went and re-loaded his three pistols: three pistols against twelve angry men fighting for their lives! He wished that he had more.

N. Matthews was waiting for him with an anxious look on his face.

"Sir," he said, "I don't like the look of it. She's getting lower in the water. And she's opening up."

Down below Hornblower had heard the ship cracking and complaining. Up on deck the cracks between the boards were wider. The swelling of the rice must have forced open the ship's sides below water. Stopping the shot-hole had only dealt with one small inflow. Water was still pouring in; the rice was still swelling and opening up the ship. Ships were built to stand against forces coming from the outside; they had no strength against pressure from the inside.

"Look there, sir," said Matthews suddenly. He pointed to a small grey creature—a rat. It was running along the edge of the deck; another one followed it; and another. Rats! Something must be happening down below which had brought them out of their comfortable nests with all that supply of food. Hornblower felt another movement under his feet as if something had broken down below.

There was one last thing which he could do. "We must throw all the rice into the sea. Get the prisoners and we'll start."

As they took the cover off the place where the rice was stored a bag of rice was forced up by the pressure below. Three bags were brought up, but after that it became more difficult to pull the bags out because each one was held firmly in place by the others. Two men had

to go down, pull the bags loose, and put ropes round them for them to be pulled up.

O. The work was terribly hard: it went on, hour after hour. As they got deeper down they found that the bags at the bottom had broken open; there was loose, wet rice everywhere, and the bags further in, further from the deck-opening, were so strongly held in position, that it was very hard work to free them and bring them to the place where they could be pulled up.

Matthews came and touched his arm. "It's no use, sir. She's lower in the water and sinking fast."

Hornblower walked with him to the side and looked over. There was no doubt about it. He had been over the side himself and he remembered the height of the water-line. The ship was six inches lower in the water, even after all those bags had been thrown over the side. The water must be pouring in and the rice still in the ship was getting heavier and heavier.

The French captain came up to him.

"This is madness," he said. "My men are worn out!"

Hornblower could see that not much more work could be got out of them, and the ship rose heavily to each wave. Soon it would not rise at all: it would sink. He turned to Matthews: "Get ready to leave the ship."

"Aye aye, sir."

There was one boat, just behind the mast. Matthews called the prisoners and hurried to the business of putting food and water in it.

"You ought to see that you have warm clothes, sir," said Hunter. "I was once in an open boat for ten days, sir."

"Thank you, Hunter."

He must take a compass, maps and all that was

necessary for finding their way. He looked at the boat. Seventeen men would more than fill it, and they must take all the food it could carry.

P. The boat was lowered into the water. The ship put her *prow* into a wave and did not rise: water poured along the deck. The noises below were louder; the rice was still swelling and breaking up the ship from the inside.

The Frenchmen began to jump into the boat; the captain followed them. Two British seamen were in the boat keeping it clear of the side of the ship.

"Go along," said Hornblower to Matthews and Carson. He was the captain and he must leave the ship last. The ship was now so low in the water that he had only to step down from the deck into the boat.

"You steer, Matthews." The men pushed the boat away. Another wave broke over the Marie Galante and poured down into her. And then she sank: the water closed over her. Her masts slowly disappeared.

"I have failed," thought Hornblower. He had been trusted to bring the Marie Galante safely to England, and he had failed: he had failed in his first command, in the first work trusted to him. If only he had remembered earlier to stop up that shot-hole! If only he had known how wet rice would behave, how it would take in the water and swell. If only he had guessed why he had found no water in the bottom of the Marie Galante. There had been so much to do: the rigging to mend, the French prisoners to guard, and so few men to do it. But those were not good enough reasons for his failure. He had failed: he had lost his ship—the first ship he had commanded.

He looked very hard at the setting sun and hoped that no one would notice the tears which were filling his eyes.

Two

THE BOAT

A. The boat was crowded: the Frenchmen from the Marie Galante were in the bows, the front part of the boat; the captain and his *mate*, the second officer, were in the middle; and Hornblower and his four seamen were in the stern, at the back of the boat.

Hornblower was feeling sea-sick: he had not got used to the movements of this small boat. He was cold, and tired after his second night without sleep.

The Frenchmen woke up at sunrise and were making a lot of noise. Matthews and Carson woke.

"Breakfast, sir?" said Matthews.

Hornblower watched the French captain give each man a piece of hard bread and a cupful of water. He wetted his finger and held it up, looking at the compass to find the direction of the wind.

"It's coming a bit more from the west," said Matthews.

"Yes," said Hornblower. With this wind he could just get round Ushant and keep clear of the French shore.

"Put up the sail, Matthews," he said.

"Aye aye, sir."

They put up the mast and the sail. The French captain noticed the change of direction—towards England. He stood up. "No! No!" he cried angrily. "The wind is just right for Bordeaux. We could be there tomorrow. Why are we going north-west?"

"We are going to England."

"But that will take a week if the weather is good. But

the boat is crowded. A storm would sink us. It is madness!"

Hornblower did not answer. He did not want to stay for years in the French prison.

"Sir!" said the captain. "You must go to Bordeaux. I demand it!"

He came forward. One of the French sailors moved to join him. Hornblower pulled out one of his pistols and pointed it. The captain looked at the pistol only four feet from his breast: he moved back.

Still keeping his eyes on the captain, Hornblower took a second pistol with his left hand.

"Take this, Matthews," he said.

"Aye aye, sir," said Matthews, "but hadn't you better *cock your pistol*, Sir?"

A pistol is "cocked" when the hammer is pulled back; until this is done the pistol cannot be fired. Hornblower was angry at himself for his forgetfulness. He drew back the hammer, and the sharp sound that this made increased the captain's sense of danger.

B. "Please, sir," said the captain, "point it some other way," and he moved back among his own men.

"Shoot any man who looks dangerous, Matthews," said Hornblower.

Hornblower had a third pistol. The French captain knew this and if he and his men attacked, he would be the first to die.

"I was in an English prison for five years," he said. "Let us make an agreement. When we reach the shore, we will land and you can go on your journey, or I will see that you and your men are sent back to England safely."

"No," said Hornblower. He knew that the French

badly needed trained seamen: there were few in France. And he knew that he could not trust the new French government.

"No!" he said as the French captain began to speak again.

"Shall I hit him?" said Hunter standing at Hornblower's side.

"No!"

"Please put that pistol away, sir," said the captain. "It is dangerous. I promise, in the name of God, that I will obey your orders and not attack you."

"And those others?" said Hornblower.

"They will make the same promise."

"Very well, then." He started to put the pistol back, and remembered, just in time, to put the hammer down and save himself from shooting himself in the stomach. He had been two nights without sleep. His eyes closed.

He woke later in the day when Carson took the place of Matthews in steering the boat.

At about midday next day they saw a sail. The Frenchmen saw it first. It was coming towards them very rapidly.

C. "What do you think she is, Matthews?" asked Hornblower.

"I don't like the look of her," said Matthews. "She might be French."

"She looks French to me," said Hunter. "Probably a *privateer*."

A "privateer" is a ship which does not belong to the Government but is allowed to attack enemy ships.

They brought the boat round, sailing away from the ship. The ship put on more sail; she came down upon

them, and passed; then stopped having cut off their escape.

A shout came across the water: the words were French, and the French captain in the boat replied. The French seamen in the boat brought it to the side of the ship.

A young man in a dark red coat greeted Hornblower when he stepped on the deck.

"Welcome, sir, to my ship," he said. "She is a privateer, named the Pique. My name is Neuville. Who are you?"

"Midshipman Hornblower, of the King of England's ship, Fearless," said Hornblower.

"You seem to be angry," said Neuville. "Please do not be angry. You shall be as comfortable as possible on this ship. Please consider yourself quite at home. You do not need those pistols. Let me take them—and that knife. Thank you. Now let me show you your cabin."

With a polite bow he led the way below.

"This door," he said, "leads to the rooms which I have kept for officers whom I take prisoner. If the ship goes into action in battle the way up to the deck will be shut down, but at all other times you may go anywhere you like on the ship. You will not, of course, prevent my men from working the ship. That would make them very angry as they get part of all our gains as a privateer and they might throw your men into the sea."

"I understand," said Hornblower.

"Is there anything else which you need?"

Hornblower looked round the small cabin in which he was to be a prisoner for weeks or months. There was a lamp, swinging to and fro giving a faint light.

"May I have something to read?" he asked.

"I have only books written in French about *seamanship*

—the art of sailing a ship. I will lend you two books, one by Grandjean and the other by Lebrun."

"Thank you. I hope I may be able to understand them."

D. The study of these books helped to keep his mind busy while the Pique sailed to and fro at the entrance of the English Channel in search of *prizes*—ships which he might take prisoner.

He looked at himself on the day of his birthday—his eighteenth birthday. His self-respect was at its lowest. He thought, "What hope is there for me in the future? I have lost my first ship. That will be the end of my life as an officer. If I ever get back to England I shall never get another ship. And when will I get back? Will I ever go back? Not till the war is ended. I have failed," he said to himself. "I am a failure. I can see no hope in the future. None!"

The Pique sailed about day after day without catching sight of a sail. And then, at last, one morning there was a shout from the *look-out man* at the top of the mast. Neuville at the wheel shouted a question and Hornblower, owing to his study of those two French books, was able to understand the answer:

"A sail on the *windward side*!" (the side from which the wind was blowing) . . . "The ship has changed her course and is coming towards us!"

Hornblower felt a wild hope. A merchant ship would sail away from the Pique as fast as possible: only a ship of war would change direction and come towards the Pique. And if that was a warship she would most probably be English. "And this," he thought, "is just where my own ship, the Fearless has been ordered to sail, so as to

catch French merchant ships." Then he thought, "It might be an Indiaman, an English ship bringing goods from India. An Indiaman is the richest prize of all; Indiamen often look very like warships and hope, for this reason, to cause enemy ships to sail away from them."

Neuville seemed to know this. The Pique sailed towards the other ship. He could see her sails now.

Matthews came running to Hornblower's side.

"That's the Fearless, sir! I'm sure of it! We'll soon be back on board."

E. A French officer pulled Matthews down and drove him away.

Neuville was shouting orders. The Pique turned away from the Fearless. Then Neuville came to Hornblower. "I think that that is your ship, Mr Hornblower."

"Yes."

Neuville smiled. "You need not have any hope of joining her. No ship can sail faster than the Pique. This is the fastest ship in the world. You will soon see that this is true." He gave Hornblower his *telescope*. Hornblower took it and looked through it. "Yes, that is the Fearless." And he saw that she was being left behind: only the top of the masts could be seen.

"In two hours," said Neuville, "you will not be able to see even the top of her masts."

"Something must be done!" thought Hornblower. He went below to his cabin. The lamp was swinging to and fro above the bed. There was another door. He could not open it, but he had twice seen it opened. It opened into a store-room: it was full of paint and other supplies.

Paint! That gave Hornblower an idea. He looked at the lamp and then at the door. He took out his knife, but

then he thought, "What a fool I am!" The door was made of two thick boards with cross-pieces on the inside. There was a key-hole, but that would not help. It would take him many hours to cut through that door with a knife, and at that time minutes were precious.

He looked round again. He reached up to the lamp and shook it: it was nearly full of oil. Then he set to work. He tore out the pages of Grandjean's book and made them into small balls which he laid at the bottom of the door. He took off his shirt, tore it into small pieces and dropped it on the paper. He looked at the bed. It was filled with *straw*. Straw is what remains of a grain-producing plant after the grain has been taken: when it is dry, it burns easily. Hornblower picked up armfuls of straw and threw it onto the heap. He tore out a page of the other book, and lighted it at the lamp. He poured the rest of the oil from the lamp on the balls of paper and on the floor near the door. He lighted one ball and the fire spread quickly. Then he put more straw on the fire. He broke up the chair and the bed and threw the pieces on the fire. At last he threw the lamp on the fire.

F. Then Hornblower put on his coat and ran out, leaving the door open so as to give more air to the fire.

He stood on deck hiding his shaking hands in his pockets. A French officer laughed and pointed at the Fearless which was quickly being left far behind. Everyone was very busy. Neuville was watching the man at the wheel and looking up from time to time at the sails.

Hornblower asked himself, "How much longer shall I have? Have I acted in time?"

He looked and saw smoke coming up from below. There was a loud cry, "Fire! Fire!" There was the

beating of a drum and shouts. Fire was the thing most feared in those wooden ships. Wood covered thickly with paint, and sails and ropes would burn fiercely. And below there was a great store of gunpowder waiting to explode and break the ship and all the men on her into pieces.

A man came running to Neuville to tell him where the fire was. Neuville heard him: he looked quickly at Hornblower, then shouted orders at the man. The smoke was coming up thickly now; more and more smoke. The following wind blew it forward. Smoke was coming out of the sides of the ship at the water-line.

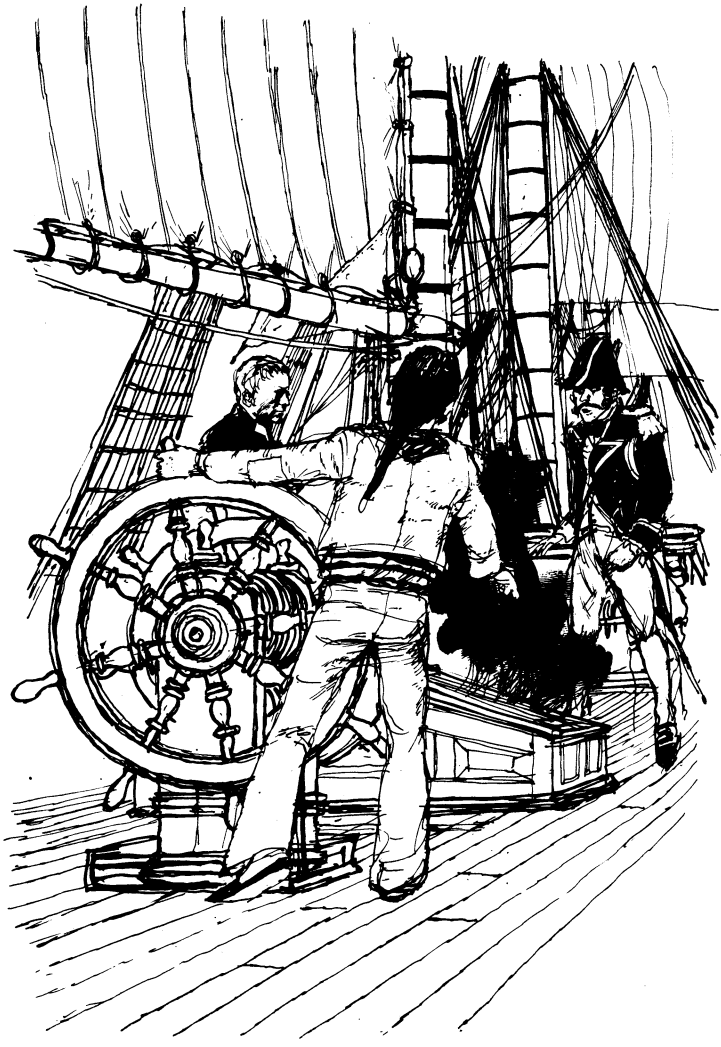
Neuville came towards Hornblower: his face was red with anger, but a cry from the man at the wheel stopped him. The man pointed to the *sky-light*, the window in the deck giving light to the cabin under it. There was a fire below it. Some of the glass fell in as they watched and a rush of fire came through the opening.

Hornblower thought, "That store of paint is just below the cabin."

Neuville shouted an order. Four men came with a pump and pumped water through the sky-light. Others stood in a line drawing water from the sea and passing it to pour into the sky-light.

From below came the sound of an explosion. Then the line of men broke up. The deck had opened under the feet of one of the men and a fire had come up through it.

G. An officer seized Neuville's arm. They talked angrily. Then Neuville gave an order. Men went to the sails. The wheel was swung over and the Pique was turned round into the wind. The fire had started at the stern of the ship and the wind had been blowing it forward; now the fire was blown backward into the part of the ship which



A cry from the man at the wheel stopped him

had already been burnt. Yet the deck was alight and the man at the wheel was forced to leave his position. One sail caught fire and was destroyed in seconds.

Hornblower looked forward and saw the Fearless again, coming with all sails set. Then she turned and stopped about 200 yards away. Two large boats with men and pumps in them were lowered into the sea. They went to the stern of the Pique and threw up water into the fire. Two more boats followed. Their men came up out of the ship and ran to help in fighting the fire. Bolton, one of the officers of the Fearless, saw Hornblower as he passed.

"Good God!" he cried. "What are you doing here?" But he did not wait for an answer.

After some time the fire was put out. The Pique was burnt to the water's edge for some distance from the stern, but she was in no danger and could be sailed to England for repair and sent to sea again.

H. Hornblower went on board the Fearless to report to Captain Sir Edward Pellew. He told everything which had happened to him from the time when he was sent to the Marie Galante. Pellew did not blame him for the loss of the ship.

"She had been struck by our guns, and no one now could tell how much harm had been done by the shot. You tried to save her, but you were unsuccessful because you had so few men. No, I do not blame you for the loss. It was more important that France should not get that rice, than that England should have it. And the same thing is true of the Pique. She is no longer in French hands and can no longer be used to attack our ships."

"Yes, sir."

Pellew looked across at the Pique, with boats still round her and only a thin line of smoke coming from her stern.

"It is strange that she caught fire like that," he said. "It was a good thing for us; she was getting away quickly and would have been out of sight in an hour."

"Yes, sir."

"Have you any idea how the fire started, Mr Hornblower?"

Hornblower was expecting that question and had already decided how he would answer it. This was his chance to describe the part he had played in taking the Pique, perhaps to be given the rank of an officer. But Pellew did not know all the facts about the loss of the Marie Galante—Hornblower himself was the only person that knew of his mistake in failing to stop the water getting to the rice before it was too late. Therefore, he alone could decide what he deserved. He looked at the captain and answered his question.

"No, sir. It must have started by chance in the paint store."

As he said the words, Hornblower felt his self-respect return to him.

"By chance? Well, it was a very lucky chance for us," said Pellew.

"Yes, sir."

Three

THE MAN WHO SAW GOD

A. Winter had come to the Bay of Biscay. The Fearless was watching the coast of France. There were cold winds, rough seas, storms. The men had to suffer continual cold and wet and salt food for week after week, month after month. Often they were shut down below with the waves washing over the deck. They had long nights and short days, broken sleep and nothing to do, nothing to interest them: they were restless and troublesome.

Hornblower wanted to get away from the crowds and smells below. There was one place where he could be alone.

The Fearless had three masts. The mast in the middle was the *main mast*; the mast behind it was the *mizzen mast.* Each mast had on it, high up, a place in which men could stand and shoot down at the men on the deck of an enemy ship: these places were called tops—the *maintop* on the main mast and the *mizzen-top* on the mizzen mast.

Hornblower put on his thick coat and climbed up to the mizzen-top and sat there. Below him the life of the ship went on. At midday she would turn south on her continual journey to and fro along the coast. Till then Hornblower could be alone and have peace.

Two hands appeared on the strong wooden wall surrounding the top. Hornblower looked angrily at them. Then a head appeared. It was Finch. He was a small man with pale blue eyes and a foolish smile.

"Sorry, sir! I didn't know that you were up here."

"Oh, come in, if you want to."

"Thank you, sir. Thank you," said Finch. He looked up at the maintop, then turned back to smile at Hornblower like a child who has been caught doing something wrong. Hornblower knew that this man was rather weak in the head.

B. Finch was very restless: he kept moving about and looking forward and up.

"What the devil is the matter with you, Finch?" he said at last.

"The Devil, sir?" said Finch. "It isn't the Devil. He's not up here, sir." That weak mysterious smile came again. Finch looked up at the maintop.

"There!" he said. "I saw him that time, sir. God has come back to the maintop, sir."

"God?" said Hornblower. "What do you mean? — God?"

"Yes, sir. Sometimes He's in the maintop. It's only from here that you can see Him, sir. . . .There He is again! God's in the maintop, and the Devil is in the cable room."

Eight bells sounded. Hornblower went down to the deck, and Finch followed, but Finch got there first because he was an experienced sailor.

The days passed, day after day, all the same. At last there came a break in the sameness. There was a shout from the look-out man at the top of the mast. A ship could just be seen on the horizon, the line between sky and sea.

Captain Pellew came running up on deck with a coat over his night-shirt: he looked at the strange ship.

"She's turned round." The Fearless swung round

to follow. Men raced up to set more sail. The Fearless lay on her side so that it was hard to keep one's feet on the deck.

"She's French," said Bolton. "Look at the sails! They're white as a lady's fingers!"

The sails of British ships were dark from sailing in all sorts of weather, but a French ship just coming out to sea had white sails.

"We're gaining on her," said Hornblower.

Captain Pellew's next order sent all the men to run out the guns on the windward side. Then the drums sounded and the men ran to their places ready for battle. They were smiling and happy: battle, even with the possibility of death, was a change from that day-to-day sameness.

Hornblower was in the mizzen-top. He looked at his men. They were getting their guns ready for action.

There was a *swivel gun* in the mizzen-top. This was a gun which could be turned on a pin so as to fire in any direction.

C. Finch came climbing into the mizzen-top carrying gunpowder and shot for the swivel gun. Hornblower took the cover off the gun and loaded it.

"Stop that, Finch!" said Hornblower angrily. Finch was looking up at the maintop.

"Sorry, sir." But Finch went on whispering: "Mr Bracegirdle is there, and Oldroyd, and all those others. But He is there too."

The Fearless swung round. Now the ships were side by side. Hornblower could look down on the Frenchman's deck, with her guns run out and the men standing round them.

There was silence on both sides. The space between the two ships was getting narrower, but they were still too far apart to start firing. There were soldiers in the French mizzen-top. The French often used soldiers on their ships as they had not enough trained seamen. The officer in the mizzen-top drew his sword and waved it at Hornblower.

Just then all the French guns were fired. The wind blew the smoke forwards. Hornblower could see dead men thrown about on the deck of the Fearless. But it was still too far to fire from the mizzen-top.

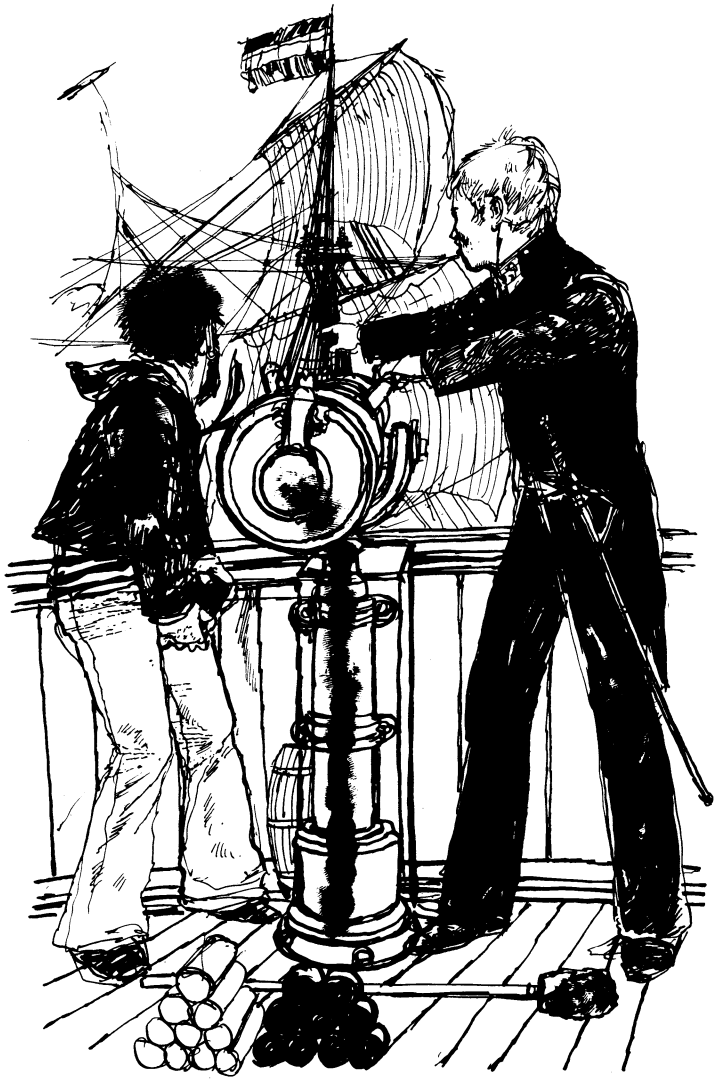
"They're firing at us," said Herbert.

"Let them," said Hornblower. Those two calm words brought courage to the men. Down below there was the noise of the guns firing at each other.

D. "Open fire now," said Hornblower. He looked along the swivel gun, and in the 'V' at the end of it he could see the wheel of the French ship. He fired. One of the men at the wheel was down and someone was running to take his place. At that moment Hornblower felt a movement. The whole top seemed to swing to one side and it shook beneath his feet. Perhaps a shot had hit the mizzen-mast.

Finch re-loaded the gun. There was a white mark on it where a shot had struck it. Another shot struck the wall of the top near Hornblower as he aimed downwards. The movement of the mizzen-top seemed to be more than the movement of the rest of the ship. Hornblower fired. He saw men fall, he saw the wheel of the French ship turn with no one to hold it.

Then the two ships came together, and everything seemed to happen at once. The mizzen mast was falling;



"Open fire now," said Hornblower

it swung round and fell forward. The mizzen-top caught the yard on the main mast.

Hornblower and Finch were holding onto the swivel gun. All the other men had gone: they had been thrown out into the sea. Hornblower and Finch still had a chance of life; but the movement of the ship or another shot from the French ship or the breaking of something could end that chance. The mizzen mast might move outwards along the main yard and fall into the sea. The mast seemed to roll over. Hornblower looked and saw the one chance of safety.

"The main yard!" he shouted. "Jump onto the main yard!"

E. Finch's face had its foolish smile. He was still holding onto the swivel gun and seemed to have no fear, and no desire to gain safety.

"Finch! You fool!" shouted Hornblower. "Jump!"

Finch only smiled.

"Jump and get to the maintop!"

Finch did not move, and then Hornblower had an idea.

"The maintop", he shouted. "God is there! Go along to God, quick!"

The words found their way into Finch's mind. He let go of the swivel gun and threw himself into the air like a frog. His body fell across some ropes and he began to climb along them. The mast rolled again so that Hornblower had to make a longer jump. He caught a rope in his hand and nearly let go, but the backward roll of the ship helped him, and soon he had reached the yard. He threw himself across it: his feet found the foot-rope. He was safe on the yard just as the top of the mizzen mast

broke free and fell into the sea. Hornblower went along the yard. Finch had gone in front of him. They were received with joy in the maintop by Midshipman Bracegirdle.

"We thought that we had lost you," said Bracegirdle. "Hornblower, the Flying Midshipman just down from heaven!"

Finch was there too, smiling his foolish smile.

Hornblower went to the side of the top and looked down. There were British seamen on the deck of the French ship and Eccles was giving orders.

The firing had ceased.

"What has happened?" he asked Bracegirdle.

"Our men went over the side onto the French ship at the moment when they touched. Why! Didn't you see?

"No, I didn't see it," said Hornblower. "Other things called for my attention at that moment."

He remembered how the mizzen-top had swung round, and he felt suddenly sick. "I must go on deck and report," he said.

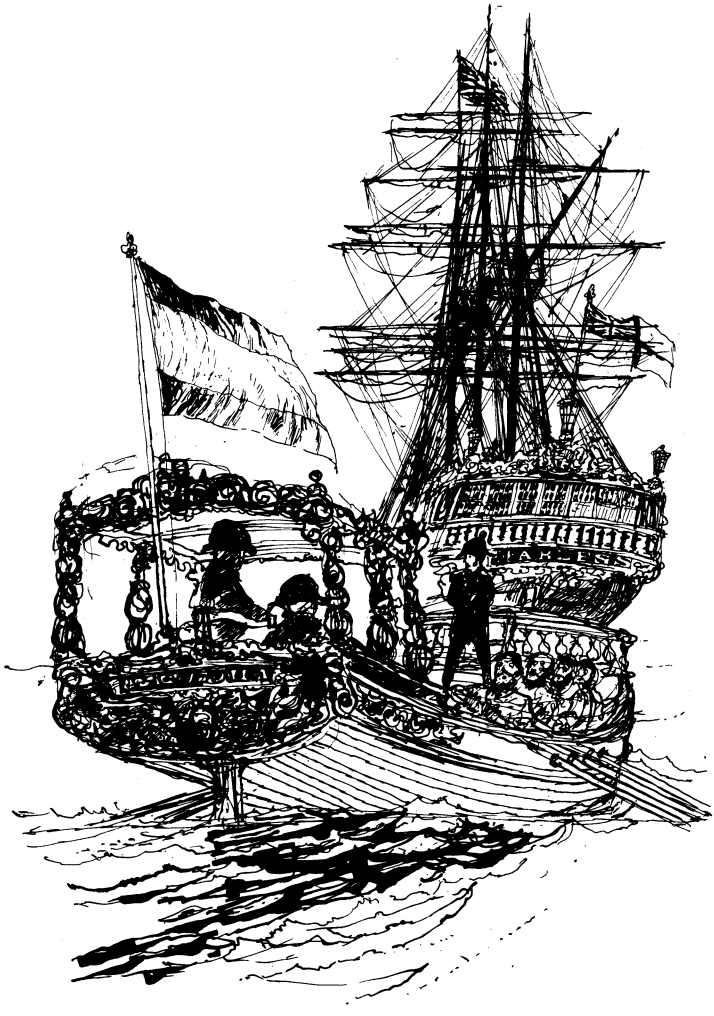
Four

SPANISH GALLEYS

A. The Fearless was lying at anchor in the Bay of Cadiz. Hornblower was on watch. He called out to Mr Chadd.

"There is a boat with the Spanish flag coming towards us."

Chadd looked at it. He saw a Spanish captain in the



"There is a boat with the Spanish flag coming towards us."

boat. Captain Pellew went to the side to greet him.

The Spanish captain came up onto the deck of the Fearless. He bowed and gave a letter to Captain Pellew.

"Here, Hornblower," said Pellew, holding the letter unopened. "Speak French to him and ask him to come below for a glass of wine."

The Spaniard bowed again, but refused the offer. "Please open the letter," he said.

Pellew opened the letter: he could not quite understand the French in which it was written. He handed it to Hornblower. "This means that the Spanish have made peace with the French, doesn't it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Please tell your captain," said the Spaniard, "that in six hours from now our guns will fire at you from the fort."

"Tell him . . . " said Pellew angrily. Then he stopped. "I mustn't let him see how I feel. . . .Tell him," he said more calmly, "that I have received his message, that I regret our separation, but shall always remember our friendship—you know the sort of polite stuff to say. Mr Eccles, I wish to be moving within an hour."

B. "Hullo!" said Wales to Hornblower. "I see that the Spaniards are going to send us on our way."

Hornblower turned his head to look, and gave a cry of surprise. Two ships had come out from the inner bay and were pointing towards the Fearless. They were a kind that Hornblower had never seen before, though he knew that they were *galleys*. They were low, flat ships with only one deck. The sails were not set on their low masts. Each galley was moved by a hundred *oars*, and the

oars were pulled by a hundred galley-slaves or prisoners, chained to their seats.

But Hornblower could not see the slaves as he watched the ships. He could only see a hundred oars that rose and fell as one, catching the sunlight as they touched the water. They looked beautiful. Then, when the ships had come nearer, he could see at the front of each galley two long guns, pointing straight forward.

"Those guns are twenty-four pounders," said Wales. "They carry shot weighing twenty-four pounds. If they catch you *in a calm* when there is no wind, they'll knock you to pieces. They'll lie just where you can't bring a gun round to aim at them and keep firing till you give in. And then God help you in a Spanish prison!"

The galleys passed in line along one side of the Fearless. The smell of the two hundred galley-slaves was carried to the men of the Fearless; they smelt terrible.

"They always smell like that," said Wales. "The slaves are never unchained until they die and are dropped over the side into the sea. There are only thirty seamen and officers to work the ship, so they dare not let the slaves loose."

The galleys turned and came back along the other side of the Fearless.

"Mr Hornblower," said Eccles, "tell the captain that we are ready to sail."

There was just enough wind to carry the Fearless round the point of the bay. The galleys came past her again with the oars beating faster.

"Set sail, Mr Eccles," said Pellew. The Fearless doubled her speed lying over to one side in the gentle wind. She passed the galleys. The long ocean waves were

too much for the galleys: they turned and went back to the safe waters of Cadiz Bay.

C. Spain had made peace with France. A few days later she joined France in making war on England. There were now very few places from which the British ships could get food and water—only from North Africa.

It was a calm, windless day in the Straits of Gibraltar. The sea was like glass and the sky was blue and cloudless. Captain Pellew was very anxious. The Fearless was giving protection to supply-ships that were bringing grain from Oran to Gibraltar. The Spanish army was already marching towards Gibraltar, and Pellew knew that the food supplies must be delivered as quickly as possible. But without any wind it would be difficult to enter Gibraltar Bay. So Pellew had given an order for the Fearless and the supply-ships to lower their boats; the seamen were rowing the boats, pulling the helpless ships. It was very hard work and the ships only moved at about one mile an hour. Perhaps in two hours more they would catch the south wind, which would take them into the Bay.

Suddenly the captain shouted down. "Mr Bolton! Mr Chadd! Bring back your boats and come and arm your men. Here come the galleys from Cadiz! They are coming straight towards us!"

This was the great chance for the galleys. They could take the supply-ships prisoner, or burn them while the Fearless lay helpless too far away to reach them with her guns. There were two big supply-ships and three smaller ones. Only one could be covered with the guns of the Fearless. The others were over a mile away and could not be protected.

"Pistols and *cutlasses*, my men!" said the captain. "And the six-pounder gun."

The men seized their arms and the six-pounder guns were lowered into the bows of the two long boats. Soon the boats, crowded with armed men, were rowing away to meet the galleys.

D. "What the devil do you think you're doing, Mr Hornblower?"

Pellew had just noticed Hornblower lowering his small boat. "What do you think you can do with that little twelve-foot boat and six men against a war-galley?"

"We can go out to one of the supply-ships, sir, and help their men."

"Oh, well," said the captain, "go on. Do your best, though you can't do much."

"Good, sir!" said Jackson, as the boat moved away from the Fearless. "Good! No one else would have thought of that."

The two bigger boats were a long way away in front; and beyond them lay the supply-ships, and the galleys were rushing down at them. One of the galleys suddenly appeared between two of the supply-ships. Hornblower saw one of the Fearless's boats turn to point her six-pounder at it. It was Mr Soames' boat.

"Pull, men! Pull!" shouted Hornblower. He could not imagine what was going to happen. That six-pounder gun would not do much harm to the strong sides of a galley; but he wanted to be in the fight.

"Pull!" shouted Hornblower again. He had nearly reached them. Soames fired. Hornblower thought that he saw where the shot hit the galley, but it did no harm.

The galley turned a little, getting exactly into line.

Then the oars moved faster: she was coming down to ram the boat: to strike it with the front of the galley, ride over it and break it to pieces.

"Pull!" shouted Hornblower. He gave a touch to the *tiller* to take the boat out beyond Soames' boat. Then he ordered his men to stop rowing as they went on past Soames. He could see Soames standing up looking at the death which was cutting through the blue water towards him. Too late Soames tried to escape. Hornblower saw the boat turn so that its side was towards the galley. That was all he could see, because the next moment the galley hid Soames' boat. Hornblower heard a cry and the noise of the crash as the galley hit the smaller boat.

The galley's forward movement was stopped for a moment— then it went on again.

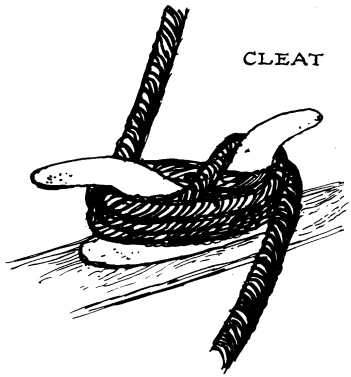
E. Hornblower's boat turned and went quickly after the galley.

"Throw the grapnel, Jackson. Catch them with the grapnel," shouted Hornblower.

A *grapnel* is a little instrument, rather like an anchor, thrown with a rope to catch other objects, especially enemy ships. Jackson ran forward through the boat, jumping over the men at the oars. He threw the boat's grapnel so that it went over the side of the galley and caught the *rail*, the iron bar running round the edge of the deck. The men rowed madly to carry the boat up to the stern of the galley.

"I can't hold her!" shouted Jackson. Then he put the rope round the T-shaped *cleat*. The galley was now pulling the boat along at the end of its twenty-foot rope. The front of the boat was pulled up out of the water. A Spaniard came running with a knife to cut the rope.

"Shoot him, Jackson!" shouted Hornblower. The Spaniard fell out of sight.



"Good shot!" said Hornblower. "Now pull up! Pull on the rope to bring us nearer."

The grapnel had caught the rail of the galley ten feet above the water; so the front of the boat was pulled up higher and higher as it came nearer.

Four or five faces appeared at the stern of the galley.

"Pistols!" said Hornblower.

The Spaniards' guns were pointing down into the boat. Shots were fired from both sides. One man fell in the bottom of the boat, but the row of faces disappeared.

F. There was a high deck at the stern of the galley, and below it there was a cabin with a window in the stern. Hornblower looked up at the deck and could see the heads of two men at the tiller steering the galley.

There was a sudden crash! Someone had broken the glass in the window of the cabin and pushed a gun through it. Hornblower's men fired at him before he had time to aim and he fell back from the window.

"By God!" shouted Hornblower. "We can go this way." He looked at the grapnel rope and at the cabin window.

"Bring them after me, one at a time, Jackson," he said. Then he threw himself forward at the grapnel rope.

His feet touched the water but his strong arms carried him upwards. He swung up his feet, broke the rest of the glass and then pushed his feet and the rest of his body through.

He fell onto the body of the dead Spaniard lying on the floor of the cabin. He went out through the door of the cabin with his cutlass in his hand. In front of him he saw the narrow way between the two lines of rowers: he saw their bearded faces, their long hair, and their brown sun-burned bodies swinging back and forward. At the far end stood the *overseer*—the man in charge of the galley-slaves. He was shouting Spanish numbers, One! Two! Three! Four! to give them the time. Beyond and above the overseer at the bow of the galley, Hornblower could see the two big guns. The gunners were standing by them, but not the full number of men needed for those two guns. The men of one gun had been called to fight against Hornblower's men in the boat.

G. Hornblower heard a step behind him. It was Jackson. "Oldroyd's coming next," he said. "Franklin is dead."

"Come on!" said Hornblower. He climbed up the ladder onto the high deck at the stern of the galley. There were about twelve men standing there crowded together: two others were lying dead, and one was wounded and sitting with his back to the rail. One man stood at the tiller. The others were looking over the rail at the boat.

Hornblower sprang up the last two or three steps, and fired his pistol into the face of a Spaniard. He dropped the pistol and took his second one in his left hand as he brought his cutlass down on a sword. He struck and struck again. Jackson was at his side. He saw Jackson's cutlass come down on the head of a man at the tiller. He saw

another sword and struck it down with his cutlass; then another, but his second pistol saved him as he fired almost without thinking. Another pistol was fired beside him. He supposed that it was Oldroyd's. And then the fight was over—finished. The Spaniards had been taken by surprise. Perhaps they did not know that the man in the cabin had been killed and had trusted him to defend that line of attack. Perhaps they never imagined that three men could be so mad as to attack four times their number.

The rest of the Spaniards were gathered on the deck in the bow of the galley. As Hornblower came forward one of them fired at him, but the ball went wide. Down below him the rowers were still swinging forward and back and the overseer was calling out numbers.

"Stop!" shouted Hornblower.

Jackson appeared at Hornblower's side and pointed a pistol at the nearest rower.

"No! No!" said Hornblower angrily. He was sick and tired of killing. "Find my pistols and re-load them."

He stood at the top of the ladder like a man in a dream. The rowers went on swinging and pulling. His enemies, about ten or twelve of them, were still standing in the bow of the galley about thirty yards away. Behind him he heard the cries of the wounded.

H. Again Hornblower ordered the rowers to stop; but they went on rowing as before.

"Shall I take down his flag, sir?" said Oldroyd.

"Yes! Yes, of course!" Now Hornblower's mind was clear. He looked beyond the galley, over the blue sea. There were the merchant ships, and over there was the Fearless. Behind him the white line left by the galley as it pushed through the water. The line was *curved*—not

straight as it usually was! At that moment Hornblower remembered that there was no one at the tiller, and that the galley had been cutting through the blue sea unsteered. He was in command of the tiller: he could steer the galley anywhere he wished.

"Take the tiller, Oldroyd," he ordered.

The other galley was disappearing into the distance. Hornblower could now see one of the boats from the Fearless coming towards them and a man was standing up in it and waving to him. That was because the Spanish flag had come down.

Another shot was fired at him from the bow; it hit the rail close by his left leg. Hornblower ran back over the dying men so that he was out of sight of the Spaniards and safe from shot. He gave an order to Oldroyd. The galley turned slowly because a galley is steered with help of the oars: it is difficult to turn it against the force of the oars still driving it forward.

I. Hornblower's small boat was still there at the galley's stern, with two dead men and one live man in it.

"Where are the others, Bromley?" Jackson shouted to the man.

Bromley pointed over the side. They had been killed by shots from the galley while Hornblower, Jackson and Oldroyd were getting through the window.

"Why don't you come on board?"

Bromley took hold of his left arm with his right: his left arm was useless. So there was no help to be had from there, and yet Hornblower knew he must have power over the whole galley. Even though he had the tiller, the man in command of the rowers could make the galley go where he wished it to.

There was only one thing that Hornblower could do. He walked forward to the rail. The Spaniards were still gathered at the other end of the galley with the overseer still giving the time to the oars. The Spaniards looked up at him as he stood there.

"My pistols, Jackson." Jackson handed him his pistols.

"Stay at the tiller, Oldroyd. Jackson, follow me and do nothing without my orders."

He went down the ladder, walked along between the two lines of rowers. He came nearer to the Spaniards. Every eye was on his face. When he was two yards away he stopped. He made a sign, pointing to the bow of the galley.

"Get forward—forward into the bow of the galley."

They stood looking at him although they must have understood.

"Go forward!"

One man seemed likely to disobey. Hornblower looked at him: "Get forward, I say!"

They began to move. He waited until they were clear away and he could speak to the overseer.

"Stop them!" he said.

J. The overseer raised his voice in a sharp order and the oars ceased to move. There was silence. He heard the sound of the water against the sides as the galley was carried forward on her way.

Hornblower turned and shouted to Oldroyd. "Oldroyd, where's Mr Chadd's boat?"

"Quite close, sir. She's coming towards us."

"Steer towards her."

How long would it take the boat to reach him? He

feared that there might suddenly be a change of feeling among the Spaniards and they might attack him. He mustn't just stand there. He must talk naturally to Jackson as if he was not just waiting.

"This ship moves well, although the rowers have stopped, doesn't she?" He forced himself to laugh.

"Yes, sir. I suppose she does," said Jackson, surprised by Hornblower's words and laughter. He moved his hands restlessly on his pistols.

"Look at that man there. Did you ever see such a big beard?"

"N-no, sir."

"Speak to me, you fool. Talk naturally."

"I don't know what to say, sir."

"Say anything."

At last Hornblower heard the boat touch the side, and the men from the Fearless came up.

"Glad to see you, sir," he said as Mr Chadd came up onto the deck.

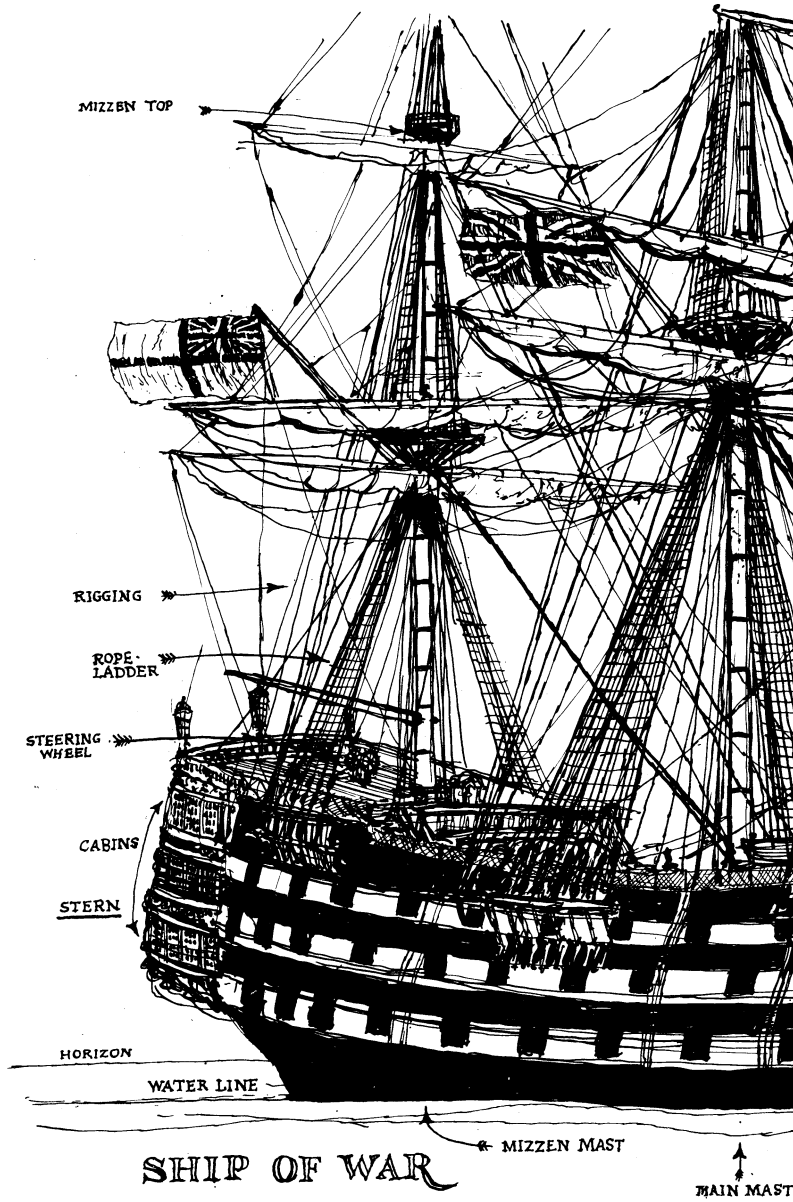
"Glad to see you," said Chadd looking about him curiously.

"Those men there are prisoners, sir," said Hornblower. "Perhaps we should disarm them and take them in charge, sir. I think that is all that remains to be done."

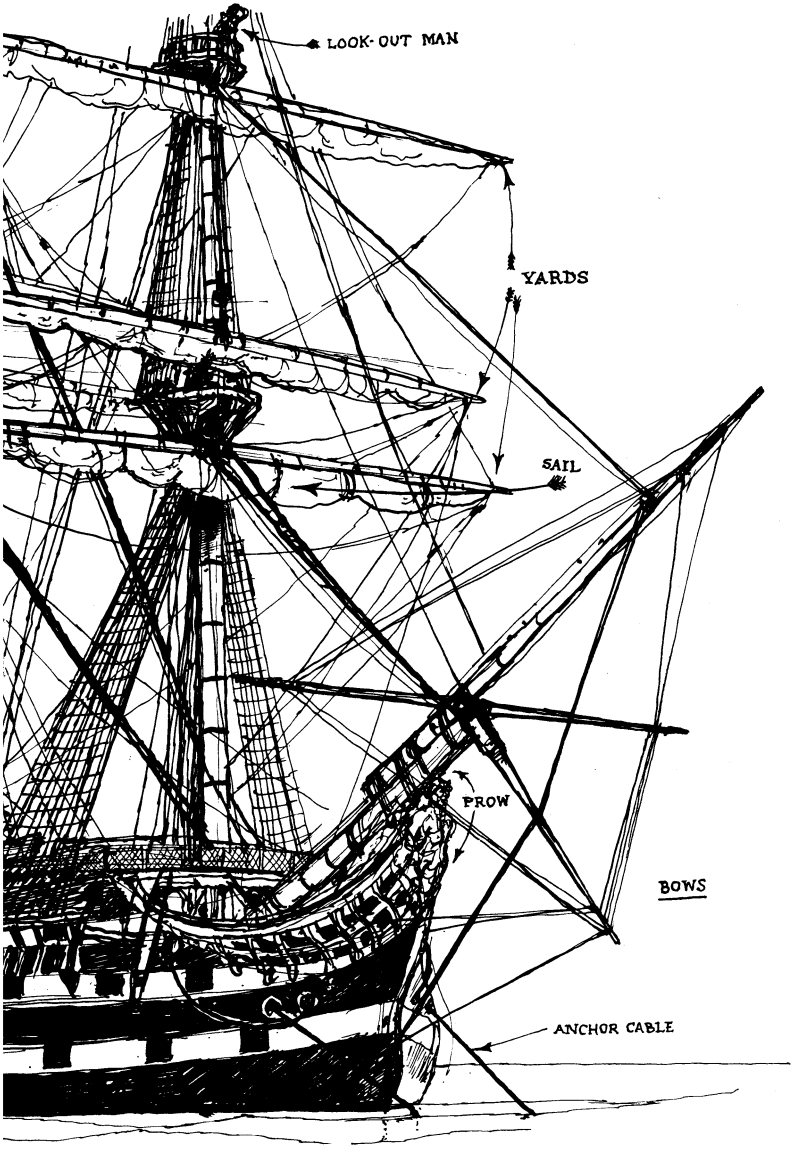
He heard the shouts greeting them as the galley came alongside the Fearless. He went up to make a report to Captain Pellew and remembered to speak highly about the bravery of Jackson and Oldroyd.

Captain Pellew looked at Hornblower. Then he said, "I shall report this to the *Admiral*" (the highest ranking officer in the navy). "The Admiral will be pleased with what you have done."

"Thank you, sir."


MIZZEN TOP
RIGGING
ROPE LADDER
STEERING WHEEL
CABINS
STERN
HORIZON
WATER LINE
MIZZEN MAST
MAIN MAST

SHIP OF WAR


LOOK-OUT MAN
YARDS
SAIL
PROW
BOWS
ANCHOR CABLE

"Now that we have lost poor Soames, we shall need another officer. I will put you in his place."

"Thank you, sir."

Soames had been a grey-haired officer who had sailed the seas for many years, but he had not had the quickness of thought to save himself from being run down by the galley. Soames was dead, and young Hornblower would take his place.

Five

FIRE-SHIPS

A. Hornblower had been made acting-lieutenant. A *lieutenant* is next in rank below a captain, and Hornblower had been given the place and work of a lieutenant while the ship was at sea. However, before he could become a real lieutenant and serve as an officer on any ship, with an officer's pay, he had to pass an examination.

The Fearless was going into Gibraltar Bay. Hornblower was standing next to Captain Pellew. He was looking through his glass at Algeciras, the part of Spain opposite Gibraltar. Spanish ships from Algeciras might come out and attack a ship going in to Gibraltar.

Gibraltar Bay was crowded with ships. The Fearless anchored. The captain sent for Hornblower. He looked up from his papers with a smile.

"Ah, Mr Hornblower, I hope you will think this good

news. There will be an examination for lieutenants tomorrow in the Santa Barbara. Are you ready to take the examination?"

"Yes, sir."

"You will be there at three o'clock tomorrow with all your papers."

"Aye aye, sir."

"Tell Mr Bolton that you may leave the ship tomorrow, and you may use one of the ship's boats."

"Thank you, sir."

For the next twenty-four hours Hornblower had to read the two big books about seamanship and he had to see that his coat and hat and shoes were all in perfect condition.

B. The Santa Barbara was an old ship used as a storeship in peace time, and as a prison in war-time. As Hornblower came up onto the deck he caught the smell of two thousand prisoners held down below.

An old lieutenant with white hair met him: "Fifteen midshipmen have come already—and just look at that!"

A large number of small boats were coming in towards the Santa Barbara, and in each boat there was a midshipman in his best clothes.

"Every midshipman in Gibraltar is hoping to become an officer. Go and wait in the cabin."

The cabin was already very full. Fifteen pairs of eyes looked up at him. Some had books in which they were anxiously reading up points about which they were doubtful. Three or four in the corner were passing a bottle round to keep up their courage. A stream of other midshipmen came in, till there was hardly room to stand.

There were sounds up on deck, and an order was shouted.

"A captain's coming on board," said someone.

One of the midshipmen looked out of the door.

"That's Dreadnought Foster," he said. "Rightly so named. *Dread* means fear, and *nought*—nothing: fear nothing. Dreadnought is the name of his ship. . . . Here's Captain Harvey . . . And now it's Black Charlie Hammond—he's not an easy one."

A messenger came: "Will the first young gentleman come. Which of you will come first?—The one nearest the door."

He came back ten minutes later, pretending to smile.

"Did you pass?"

"No. I've got to spend three more months at sea."

"What did they ask for?"

"They asked 'What is a rhumb line?'"

Thirty men opened their books to read about rhumb lines.

C. Time passed. The cabin was now less crowded. Night came. It was Hornblower's turn next. He went along the deck to the cabin in which the three examiners were sitting. It was a very dark night: there was neither moon nor stars. A gentle wind was blowing from the south.

"Your name?"

"Hornblower, sir. Acting-Lieutenant on the Fearless."

He handed them his papers.

"Now, give me the answer to this. Answer quickly. You are sailing up the Channel with a strong north-east wind. Dover is two miles away to the north."

"Yes, sir."

"Now the wind swings round towards the east, so that it is straight in front of you—you are going to lose your mast or be driven onto the rocks at Dover. What do you do, sir? What do you do?"

Hornblower could not think. His mouth opened and shut.

"By now, you have lost your mast," said Black Charlie Hammond, the man in the middle.

"Yes," said the man on the left. "You're *dismasted*: You have lost your mast and you are being blown towards the cliffs of Dover. You are in serious trouble, Mr Hornblower."

He was indeed in serious trouble—in serious danger of failing in his examination. His mouth opened and shut again—he could not think. He heard, without paying attention to it, the sound of a gun. The captains took no notice either. Then there was a number of shots, and the captains got up and rushed out of the cabin. Hornblower followed them.

Over the water they could hear the drums sounding the alarm on all the ships. The rest of the midshipmen waiting for the examination were crowded together on deck.

"Look there!" said one of them. There was a yellow light half a mile away; it grew until they saw the burning ship. She had every sail set and was coming straight towards the crowd of English ships. "Fire-ships!"

D. "Officer of the watch! Call my boat," shouted Foster.

A line of fire-ships was running before the wind straight at the crowd of anchored ships. On the Santa Barbara seamen and soldiers came pouring out on deck. Captains

and midshipmen shouted for their boats to take them back to their ships.

"You there!" shouted Hammond suddenly. "You shore-boat! Come, or I'll fire into you!"

The boat turned and came to the side. The three captains went down the chains and threw themselves into the boat. Hornblower followed. He thought, "After the captains have reached their ships I can use this boat to reach the Fearless."

"Pull for the Dreadnought," said Foster. "Oh, pull! Pull!"

"There's one of them," said Harvey. A small ship was coming towards them. As they watched it the fire broke out from below covering the whole ship with bright flames. Flames of fire came out from the holes in her side. The water round her was bright red.

"She'll run into the Santa Barbara. God help them! She'll be there in a minute."

Hornblower thought of the two thousand French and Spanish prisoners shut down below the decks.

"With a man at the wheel she could be steered clear," said Foster. "We ought to do it. We must steer the fire-ship away from the Santa Barbara."

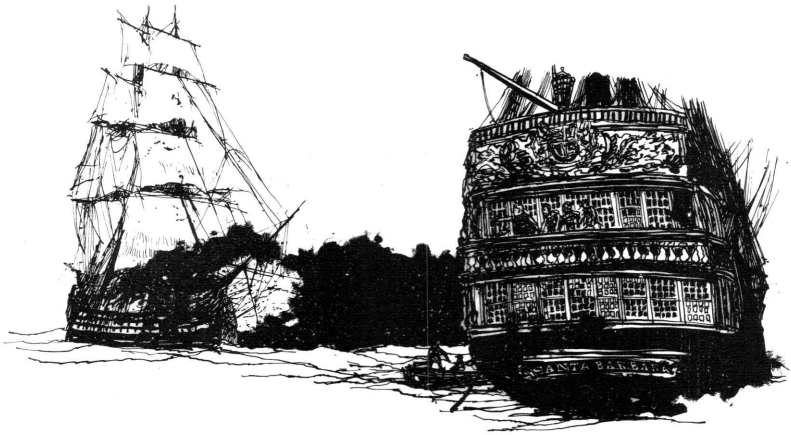
Harvey put the tiller over. "Pull!" he shouted at the boatmen. "Pull!" He took out his sword and pointed it to the nearest boatman. "Pull!"

"Go under her stern. I'll jump for it," said Foster.

"Let me go, sir," said Hornblower.

"Come with me if you like. It may need two of us."

E. Harvey steered the boat under the fire-ship's stern. Hornblower jumped. His hands caught something and he pulled himself up on deck. The wind was behind the fire-



"She'll run into the Santa Barbara!"

ship, so the flames were blown forward. Here at the stern it was only very hot. Hornblower threw off the rope with which the wheel was tied. He seized the wheel; he threw his weight against it and turned it. The fire-ship turned away from the Santa Barbara. A sudden rush of flames poured up from below setting the mast and rigging on fire. The wind suddenly carried some of the flames back. The stern of the fire-ship was just going to catch the bow of the Santa Barbara. Hornblower turned the wheel over the other way.

The flames had driven Foster away; now he came back. He shouted an order and Hornblower again pulled at the wheel. The fire-ship passed along the side of the Santa Barbara at a distance of only two or three yards. Men were running along ready to push the fire-ship off. Hornblower saw them out of the corner of his eye as they went by. Now they were clear.

The noise of the fire was terrible. It was difficult to believe that it was still possible to live and breathe on this little part of the deck. Both masts were towers of flame.

Foster said, "We'll run her onto the land just there—on the *neutral ground*." This was a piece of land that was neither English nor Spanish.

F. Hornblower gave a slight turn to the wheel. The whole deck a yard or two in front of the wheel opened up in flame. Fire came out of the openings between the boards. The heat was unbearable. The fire moved rapidly back.

Hornblower felt for the rope to tie up the wheel; but the wheel turned freely and uselessly under his hands. The steering ropes below him had burned away. At the same time the deck under his feet curved up with the heat: at any moment it would be on fire.

He went to the rail: Foster was there.

"The ropes have burnt away."

Flames shot up beside them. His coat was beginning to burn.

"Jump!" said Foster.

Hornblower felt Foster pushing him. He threw himself over into the sea. The breath was knocked out of his body as he hit the water. The water closed over him. He struggled up into the air. It was cold. It is cold in the Mediterranean Sea in December. For a moment the air in his clothes held him up, but the sword at his side was heavy. He could see nothing in the darkness. Foster came up beside him.

"They were following us in a boat to take us up. Can you swim?"

"Yes, sir. Not very well."

"I'm the same," said Foster. Then he called out to the boat: "*Ahoy! Ahoy!* Hammond! Harvey!" He tried to raise himself out of the water so as to shout louder, but he fell back and the water flowing into his mouth silenced him.

Hornblower tried to take off his sword; he failed, and sank deeper into the water. He struggled up, took a deep breath, then was able to draw out the sword and it fell down to the bottom; but that did not seem to help him much.

G. Then Hornblower heard the sound of oars, and saw the dark shape of a boat coming towards them. He gave a cry. In a few seconds the boat had reached them and he seized its side.

They were lifting Foster over the stern. Hornblower forced himself to let go of the boat so that they could pass him round to the stern. They pulled him in. He fell face downwards in the bottom of the boat. Then someone spoke, and someone answered. The words were Spanish! These men were not from Gibraltar. This boat was one of the Spanish boats which had come in with the fire-ships, set fire to the ship and were now coming back in the boat.

Foster asked, "Who are these men?"

"I think that they are coming back from a Spanish fire-ship, sir," said Hornblower. "We are prisoners."

"Oh, are we?"

Foster tried to get to his feet, but the Spaniard at the tiller pushed him down with one hand. Foster tried to put his hand away and raised his voice in a weak cry; but the man at the tiller brought out a knife. Foster saw it in the red light from the fire-ship, and ceased to struggle.

Men might call him "Dreadnought Foster", but he could see the need for being careful.

Hornblower was feeling very cold in his wet clothes with the cold night air blowing over him; and he was weak and tired after all the excitements of the day.

"Boat ahoy!" There was some dark shape in the night over there. The Spaniard pulled the tiller over and steered away from it, while the men at the oars pulled faster.

"Boat ahoy!" came the shout again. "Stop, or I'll fire!"

"That's a guard boat," said Foster. "One of ours."

The Spaniards did not answer. Then there was the sound of a gun. They could not hear where the ball went; it missed them but it would catch the attention of the men on the ships towards which they were going.

"Boat ahoy!" There was a shout from another boat in front of them. The Spaniards at the oars stopped, but the man at the tiller shouted and set them to work again. The boat turned sharply and the rowers pulled their hardest. The boat rushed forward to run into the guard boat in front and turn it over; then they might get away while the other guard boat stopped to pick up the men who had fallen into the water.

H. There was a crash. The bow of the Spanish boat went up over the British boat, but did not turn it over. At the next moment the second guard boat came up and men jumped onto them. Someone threw himself on Hornblower, driving the breath out of him. Hornblower heard Foster shouting angrily. A moment later Hornblower was set free and he heard the midshipman of the guard boat saying, "Sorry, sir. Very sorry. Didn't see who you were, sir."

Someone lit the lamp, and Foster could be seen with his hair wet and his clothes disordered.

"Boat ahoy!" Another boat came out of the darkness and pulled towards them.

"Captain Hammond, I believe you are Captain Hammond?"

There was an angry sound in Foster's voice.

"Thank God!" said Hammond.

"But no thanks to you," answered Foster.

"We followed as fast as we could after your fire-ship left the Santa Barbara."

"But it was the Spaniards who saved us. I thought that I could trust two brother captains. I wish you good-night, sir."

He turned to the midshipman of the guard boat: "You, sir, will take charge of these prisoners, and you will take me to my ship."

"Aye aye, sir."

"Tell them that I shall send them back to Spain as free men. They saved our lives." He turned to Hornblower.

"And you, my fire-breathing friend, I wish to thank you. You did well. I shall see that it is reported to your captain."

"Thank you, sir." Hornblower wanted to ask a question. "My examination, sir?"

"I think that you must wait for the next examination."

"Aye aye, sir," said Hornblower sadly.

"Now listen, Mr Hornblower. I seem to remember that you were sailing up the Channel with a strong north-east wind. The wind swung round towards the east and you had lost your mast and were going to be driven onto the cliffs at Dover. In one more minute you would have

failed in your examination. It was the gun that saved you. Is that not so? You were saved by the gun."

"Yes, sir."

"Then be thankful for small mercies; and even more thankful for big ones."

Six

THE DUCHESS

A. Acting-Lieutenant Hornblower was bringing a ship named La Rêve to anchor in Gibraltar Bay. La Rêve was a small, very fast ship, taken from the French.

Captain Pellew in the Fearless had not yet returned; so Hornblower had to report to the Admiral.

"Get the boat out," he ordered, "and you can let the prisoners come up on deck."

Ten minutes later Hornblower was reporting his arrival to the Admiral.

"You say that she is a fast boat? She has a good speed?" said the Admiral.

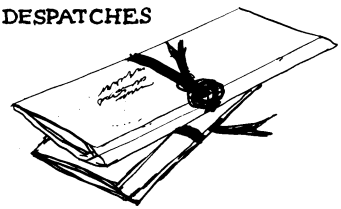
"Yes, sir."

"Well—I can use her. I shall take her into the British Navy and use her to carry *despatches*—important letters to the government in London."

Next day Hornblower received a letter: "You will take command of La Rêve, now a ship of the King's Navy, and sail as fast as possible to Plymouth, as soon as the despatches are put in your charge."

B. Hornblower was delighted. He had command of a ship although he was only an acting-lieutenant! And it was three years since he had seen England.

Another letter was given to Hornblower at the same time. "The Governor of Gibraltar, Sir Hew Dalrymple and Lady Dalrymple request the pleasure of Lieutenant Hornblower's company at dinner at three o'clock at Government House."



"Well!" he thought, "Midshipman Bracegirdle has a rich father and has very nice clothes which will fit me. So it will be a pleasure to go to dinner at Government House."

At Government House a young officer took charge of Hornblower and led him forward. He bowed to the Governor. Sir Hew was a red-faced excitable old gentleman and Lady Dalrymple was a red-faced excitable old lady.

Lady Dalrymple said, "This is the Duchess of Wharfdale. Duchess, this is Mr Hornblower, the new captain of La Rêve."

A Duchess! Hornblower laid his hand on his heart and made a deep bow—as deep as Bracegirdle's clothes would allow.

The Duchess had bright blue eyes and a middle-aged face which had once been beautiful.

"So this is the fellow you spoke of!" said the Duchess. "Matilda, my dear, are you going to trust my life to a mere boy?" There was nothing strange in the words which the Duchess said, but the way in which she said them

came as a surprise to Hornblower. This beautifully-dressed Duchess spoke with the uneducated voice of a woman from the East End of London where the poorest people live. He raised his eyes to look at her, forgetting to stand up straight. He stood there, still bowing with his hand on his heart, his head pushed forward.

"You look like a goose in the field!" said the Duchess. "I expect you to hiss at any moment."

She put out her head, and swung from side to side with her hands on her knees, so like a goose that all the other guests laughed. Hornblower stood up straight, feeling very foolish and uncomfortable.

C. "There, there," said the Duchess. "Don't be hard on the young fellow. He's only young and that's nothing to be ashamed of. It's something to be proud of—to be trusted with a ship at his age."

A servant came to the door: "Dinner is served." They went into the dining-room. Hornblower was, of course, in the middle of the table with the younger officers. Sir Hew sat at one end with the Duchess, and Lady Dalrymple sat with the oldest captain at the other end. There were not nearly as many women as men; so Hornblower had on his right the young officer who had taken him in charge.

The captain raised his glass to the Duchess: "I drink to your health," he said.

"Thank you," she said. "You're just in time to save my life by giving me the chance to drink." She raised her full glass to her lips, and, when she put it down, it was empty.

"You are going to have an amusing companion!" said the young officer.

"How is she going to be my companion?" asked Hornblower.

The young officer laughed. "So you haven't been told? When you sail with the despatches tomorrow you will have the honour of taking the Duchess with you to England."

"Good God!" said Hornblower. "But who is she?"

"She is the Duchess of Wharfdale."

"But she doesn't talk like a duchess," said Hornblower.

"No. The Duke was very old when he married her. Her first husband was an inn-keeper. That is what her friends say: others say something far worse than that!"

"But what is she doing here?" asked Hornblower.

"She is on her way back to England. She was in Florence in Italy when the French marched in. That's what I am told. She escaped and reached Leghorn, where she gave a lot of money to an Italian ship to bring her here. She asked Sir Hew to find a ship to take her to England. Sir Hew asked the Admiral. Sir Hew would do anything for a duchess, even if her first husband was an inn-keeper.

"I see," said Hornblower.

D. There was loud laughter from the other end of the table. The Duchess had picked up her knife and was pushing it into the Governor's red-coated side so as to make sure that he had understood the point of her funny story.

"You will certainly have plenty of fun on your journey home," said the young officer.

A large piece of meat was put down in front of Hornblower. He had to cut it up and offer it to the other guests. He had difficulty in cutting it.

"That meat is from North Africa," said the officer. "It will be terrible to eat."

Most of the guests chose the other dishes, so Hornblower had little work to do. He put two pieces of meat on his own plate, and ate with enjoyment. The other young officer had never been to sea; he could not guess how good this food tasted to Hornblower, especially the sweet things, with plenty of cream, which were never seen on a ship.

Then they drank the health of the King, and raised their glasses to the Duchess.

"And now for the enemy," said Sir Hew. "May their treasure-ships try to cross the Atlantic—so that we may catch them."

"And I wish to add to that," said the captain.

"May the Spaniards decide to come out from Cadiz."

The naval officers round the table drank to that gladly. For several months they had been hoping to catch the Spaniards if they came out.

"We drink to the Spaniards," said Sir Hew, "and may they come out from Cadiz!"

The ladies left the room. Hornblower asked to be allowed to leave the party as he had to get ready his ship to sail early next morning.

E. Hornblower was up before the sun so as to see that his ship was ready to face the sea and the many enemies on it. He had only four small guns, firing balls weighing only four pounds: that meant that he was not safe from anyone. His ship was the weakest ship at sea. Even the smallest merchant-ship carried bigger guns. His only safety lay in his speed in getting away. He read over his orders with Midshipman Hunter and with his head sea-

man Winyatt so as to make sure that every man of his eleven seamen knew his duty. Then he had breakfast and put on his best clothes to wait for the Duchess.

She came early. Sir Hew and Lady Dalrymple had to get up at an uncomfortably early hour to come with her to the ship.

The Governor's boat arrived. Sir Hew came on board and Lady Dalrymple followed him. Then the Duchess came and her companion, a younger woman as beautiful as the Duchess must once have been.

"Let me show you to your cabin," said the Governor.

"Oh!" cried Lady Dalrymple when she saw it. "It's so small!" There was only just room for two beds, and the deck above was so low that everyone hit their heads on it.

"Well," said the Duchess, "we shall live through it—and that's more than a man going to Tyburn to be hanged can say."

An officer handed two packets of despatches to Hornblower and he signed his name on a paper to show that he had received them.

F. Sir Hew and Lady Dalrymple went back to their boat. The anchor was raised; the sails were set. La Rêve met the first of the big waves coming in from the Atlantic Ocean. The ship rolled. Hornblower heard something fall and a cry from the Duchess's cabin, but could do nothing about it. He was watching the coast of Spain: some warships might come out to catch such a helpless thing as La Rêve. He did not rest or go below all day. At last, the mountains of Southern Spain began to sink out of sight, and Hornblower began to think about dinner. He went below and sent for the cook.

"Knock on the Duchess's door and ask if everything is all right, and tell her that dinner will be ready in a short time."

He heard the Duchess say, "I need nothing—not even dinner."

Hornblower ate his dinner and went on deck again. Winyatt was on watch.

"The *fog* is coming up thick, sir," he said to Hornblower.

Hornblower looked around him. Winyatt was right. Fog—that thick, cloud-like condition of the air that makes it difficult to see—had already hidden the sun from view, and soon it would be night.

"It will be thicker by morning," said Hornblower. "We must go farther to the west instead of north-west. We must keep clear of Cape St. Vincent."

He gave the order to change course. Hornblower had plenty of time later to think what might have happened if he had not given that order.

During the night he came up on deck several times. The fog was getting thicker.

A seaman woke him: "Please, sir. Please, sir. Mr Hunter sent me. He says, 'Please come on deck, sir'."

"I'll come."

Hunter was standing with his back to the wheel. "Listen!" he said.

"There's a ship close to us," said Hornblower.

"Yes, sir," said Hunter. "And after I sent for you I heard an order given. It was in Spanish."

"Call all the men to their posts. Quietly."

G. Hornblower thought, "If that ship is bigger than a merchant-ship, we are in great danger. But she might be

The fog was getting thicker

a treasure ship. We might go on board and take her and be rich for the rest of our lives."

"Good morning to you," said a voice at his side. He had forgotten that the Duchess was on board.

"Stop that noise!" he said.

"May I ask . . . " she began.

"Shut up!"

A voice could be heard through the fog and other voices repeating the order.

"That's Spanish, sir, isn't it?"

"Yes."

Two strokes of a ship's bell came to them across the water. Then more bells were heard from all round them.

"We're in the middle of them, by God!" whispered Hunter.

"Big ships," said Winyatt who had just joined them. "I could tell from the number of voices repeating the order."

"The Spaniards are out," said Hunter.

"And," thought Hornblower, "the course which I set has taken us into the middle of them! Sir Hew wanted the Spaniards to come out from Cadiz, but that is little comfort to us now!"

Aloud he said, "They are setting more sail. They always stop at night and set sails again at sunrise."

Hornblower could hear the sound of this being done all round him.

"Let's hope they are on a different course from ours," said Winyatt. "Then we'll soon be through them."

"I don't think so," said Hornblower. He thought, "If they are on a different course the sound would become greater and then less as each ship passes. But that isn't so. Our ship, sailing at night, has come up to the Span-

iards and sailed into the middle of them. What shall we do now? Shall we stop and let them go on past us, or put on sail so as to pass through them? As long as the fog stays, we are safest where we are."

H. Thicker fog was being blown past them. Then they ran into a clear piece of water.

"There she is!" said Hunter.

The seamen began to move about in sudden fear.

"Stand still!" said Hornblower. "Keep quiet!"

There was a three-decked warship sailing along beside them, less than a cable's length (600 feet) away. In front and on the other side other battleships could be seen. Nothing could save La Rêve if they drew attention to themselves: they must keep going on as if they had as much right to be there as all those other ships. It was possible that the Spanish officer of the watch did not know that there was no ship like La Rêve sent with them from Cadiz. La Rêve was a French ship and Spain was fighting on the side of France.

There was no unusual movement on the deck of the Spanish ship.

Hornblower gave an order. La Rêve changed direction.

"We're crossing their course now," he said.

"Let's hope it's under their stern, not in front of their bows," said Winyatt.

The Duchess was still there.

"I think you should go below," said Hornblower.

"Oh no! Please," said the Duchess. Hornblower forgot her as a sudden thought came to him. He went quickly below and came up with the two big packets of despatches.

I. Hornblower took a heavy iron pin (a *belaying pin*)

and began to tie the despatches to it with a piece of rope.

"Please," said the Duchess, "please, Mr Hornblower, tell me what you are doing."

"I want to make sure that these will sink when I throw them into the water if we are taken prisoner."

"Then they will be lost."

"It is better to lose them than to have the Spaniards reading them."

"I can take care of them for you. Really I can," said the Duchess.

"No," he said, "they might search your bags and boxes."

"Of course they will. But they won't search me. I'll put them near my skin. If they take the ship they won't keep me a prisoner. They'll send me to Lisbon and put me on an English ship. So the despatches will be delivered. They'll be late, but better late than never."

"That's true," said Hornblower.

"The fog is getting thinner," said Winyatt.

"Quick!" said the Duchess.

He gave the despatches to her.

"There's no room for them up at the top of this dress. I'll lift up my dress and put them in from below. Give me a piece of that rope. Quick!"

She was already pulling up her dress. Hornblower saw the white upper part of her legs, and quickly turned his eyes away.

"You can look at me now," said the Duchess. "They are inside my clothes, next my skin. One of them is flat against me in front and the other is against my back. Would you guess that they are there?"

She turned round.

"No. Nothing shows," he said. . . . "Thank you."

"There is some thickness in front, and the Spaniards might think that I am—that I am . . . But it doesn't matter what they think so long as they don't guess the truth."

J. The sun was breaking through the fog. Hornblower could see that the sea was covered with ships. He could see six quite plainly.

"Steer back into the fog." But the fog into which they steered was already very thin.

The heavy sound of a gun reached their ears and a shot struck the water just in front of them. Hornblower looked round just in time to see the smoke from the bows of the ship pursuing them.

He gave an order to the man at the wheel.

There was another shot—this time it fell behind them.

Hornblower suddenly remembered the Duchess. "You must go below," he said.

"Oh no, no, no!" she answered angrily. "I can't go into that smelly box of a cabin where my servant is being sick and hoping to die!"

"Sail ahead!" cried the lookout.

A battleship was coming out of the fog less than a mile in front.

Two more shots from the Spanish ship at the back. Those shots would tell the battleship that La Rêve was being pursued. The battleship was waiting for them. Hornblower gave an order and La Rêve turned towards the space between the pursuer and the battleship—a space which was becoming narrower and narrower. The pursuer turned to cut her off, and fired two more shots. The battleship fired a shot: it passed within a few feet of Hornblower: the wind of it nearly knocked him down. There was a hole in the main sail.

Another shot struck the side and at the same moment the mast was hit. Mast, sails and rigging went over the side, pulled the ship round and stopped her. She lay helpless.

"Is anybody hurt?"

"Only a scratch," said one voice.

K. The battleship was sailing away. The pursuer was coming on fast. The Duchess's servant came up so mad with fear that her sea-sickness was forgotten.

"You had better see to your things, Duchess," said Hornblower. "You will be leaving us shortly. I hope the Spaniards will be able to make you more comfortable than we have done here."

He was trying to speak naturally, as if nothing unusual was happening, as if he would not soon be a prisoner of the Spaniards; but the Duchess could see how he really felt.

"How can I tell you how sorry I am about this?" she said.

"I am sorry for your sake," said Hornblower.

The Spanish ship was a cable's length away.

"Please, sir," said Hunter, "we could fight them in their boats when they try to come on board."

Hornblower nearly said, "Don't be a fool!"; but he pointed to the Spanish ship with her twenty guns aimed at her ready to fire.

A boat was being lowered.

"I want to tell you a secret," said the Duchess.

She stood there with her arm round her weeping servant looking straight at him. Hunter and Winyatt moved away.

"I'm not a duchess," she said. "I'm no more a duchess than you are."

"Good God!" said Hornblower. "Then who are you?"

"Kitty Cobham. Five years ago I was a well-known actress. When the French marched into Florence I hadn't a penny. Who would help a one-time actress whose lover had left her? But I knew that Old Dalrymple at Gibraltar could not do enough for the Duchess of Wharfdale."

"Why did you choose that name?"

"It's the name of a part in a play in which I once acted."

L. "But my despatches!" cried Hornblower. "Give them back to me! Quick!"

"If you wish it. But I can still be a duchess when the Spaniards come, and I'll guard these despatches better than my life. I'll deliver them in less than a month if you trust me. I used to drink too much, but I won't drink any more. Trust me. Let me do what I can for my country."

She met Hornblower's eyes. He knew that he could trust her.

"Keep them," said Hornblower. "Deliver them when you can."

The Spanish boat was at the side; a Spanish officer came on board. He and Hornblower bowed to each other. The Spaniard looked surprised at the sight of the two women.

"La Señora la Duquesa de Wharfdale," said Hornblower.

The Spaniard made a very deep bow. Hornblower could now be sure that the despatches were safe.

As he waited there on the deck of his little ship, a

prisoner of the Spaniards, he could hear a noise far away. At first it sounded like a storm, but it was too continuous. It was the roll of guns, the noise of a naval battle. Somewhere over there at Cape St. Vincent the British ships had caught the Spaniards at last.

Seven

PRISONER

A. Being a prisoner is a terrible thing. Of course it is uncomfortable—ten square feet of floor-space for each man; but that is no worse than young officers have to suffer at sea. The terrible thing is the loss of freedom.

Four months passed before the first letter came. It was brought to him by a Spanish soldier who had difficulty in reading the strange name. Hornblower did not know the handwriting, and for a moment he thought that he had opened someone else's letter.

It began "Dearest Boy". He thought, "Who on earth would call me that?" He read on:

Dearest Boy,

I hope that it will give you happiness to hear that what you gave me has been safely delivered. They told me, when I delivered it, that you are a prisoner. And they told me too that they were pleased with you for what you have done.

One of those admirals has a business interest in a

Drury Lane theatre. I smiled at him: I didn't know then that he had put money into the theatre. I told him about my dangers with those precious things which you gave me: I made a good story of it. But he believed me, and he was so pleased with my story that he told Mr Sheridan to give me a part in his next play at Drury Lane. So I am playing a very good part—of a mother who has lost her son, and I am very successful. I have not drunk any wine since I saw you, and never will do so again.

The Admiral told me that he would see that this letter reaches you; I hope that it will bring you some comfort.

I pray for you every night.

Ever your faithful friend,
Katherine Cobham

B. Next day a prison-guard came to take him to the Commander.

"Good afternoon," said the Commander. "Please sit down. I have a letter here from the Admiral in London telling the government of Spain that, because of his excellent service, Acting-Lieutenant Hornblower has been made full lieutenant; he hopes that you will be treated as an officer."

"Thank you, sir."

The Commander was a kind old man. "Now that you are an officer you will be moved to the prison camp for officers."

"Thank you, sir."

"And you will receive the full pay of a lieutenant."

"Thank you, sir."

"And you will be allowed to go out of the camp for two

hours each day if you give your *parole*—that means if you promise not to try to escape."

"Thank you, sir."

C. The long months which followed were slightly better, but what he enjoyed most was the two hours of freedom. He could, if he wished, wander in the little town and have a glass of wine and talk politely—but with some difficulty—with Spanish soldiers or seamen or shopkeepers. But it was better to spend his two hours wandering over the hills in the wind and sun, looking at the sea.

Then came the storms, with the wind blowing in from the Atlantic Ocean. The sea was heaped up with waves like mountains which beat upon the coast.

Hornblower stood on the hill above Ferrol Bay. The wind was so strong that he could hardly breathe. For two hours he was there alone and free—two precious hours. Sometimes he saw a British warship sailing along the coast and keeping watch on the Spanish navy or hoping to take prisoner some merchant-ship sailing along the coast. When a British ship went by he stood and looked at it as a man dying of thirst might look at a bowl of water held beyond his reach. For this was the end of his second year as a prisoner of war.

Eight

FREEDOM

A. Hornblower stood on the hill top with the wind rushing past him as if it were shouting with the joy of its freedom. As he faced the wind, he saw in front of him the city of Corunna with its little white houses. Between him and Corunna there was Corunna Bay. To his left there was the narrow entrance to Ferrol Bay, and from the foot of the cliffs a long line of rocks ran out towards the north. They were called the Devil's Teeth. Every half-minute a wave struck these rocks with such force that it seemed to shake the hill on which Hornblower stood. Then the water was blown back by the wind and showed the long black teeth of the rocks.

Hornblower was not alone there. A few yards away from him a Spanish soldier was on watch. He was looking out to sea through his telescope. It was always necessary to watch because British ships might suddenly appear, land a little army to take Ferrol and burn the ships and stores in the *dockyard*—the place in which ships were repaired and made ready for sea. But this would not happen today in such a storm.

But the Spaniard kept looking out to sea. Hornblower looked in the same direction, but he could not see what had caught the man's attention. Then the man turned and ran to the stone guard-house where the soldiers were kept to work the guns on the hill. He came back with one of the guards. The guard took the telescope and looked in the direction pointed out by the look-out man and they talked

in an excited way. Then Hornblower saw what they were talking about. There was a grey square, far out to sea. It was the top-sail of a ship. She was running before the wind so as to reach safety in Corunna or Ferrol.

B. This seemed a foolish thing for a ship to do, because it would be very difficult for her to get into Corunna Bay and even harder to get through the narrow entrance to Ferrol. A more careful captain would go out to sea, away from the coast until the wind went down; but of course a Spanish ship would want to reach the land as quickly as possible when there was a chance that the British Navy might be near.

"I must ask them!" he thought. So he went up to the two Spaniards. "Please, gentlemen," he said, "What do you see there?"

One of them gave him the telescope. He took it eagerly: he could see a small ship carrying more sail than it was wise to carry rushing wildly towards them. Then, a moment later, he saw another square of grey—another ship. She was a British warship, pursuing the Spanish ship. Could the Spanish ship reach the protection of the guns on the land before the British ship caught her?

The Spaniard quickly took the telescope from Hornblower. He had been watching Hornblower's face and it told him what he wanted to know—that those two ships out there were behaving in a strange way, and he should inform his officer. The two Spaniards ran back to the guard-house. Soon the men from the guard-house were running to the guns on the edge of the cliff. Then an officer came riding up the path. He looked through the telescope, then rode over to the guns. A shot was fired to call the rest of the defences. The flag of Spain rose up near

the guns and was answered by a flag at San Anton, the fort guarding Corunna Bay.

C. The two ships had now covered half the distance towards Corunna Bay. Hornblower expected them to lose a mast or have their sails blown away. The British ship was half a mile behind the other: she must be much closer than that to have any hope of hitting the Spanish ship with her guns.

The Commander came riding up the path with his officers. He saw Hornblower and raised his hat politely. Hornblower, having no hat, bowed. Then he walked over to the Commander and said, "My two hours of freedom end in ten minutes, sir. May I stay, please?"

"Yes. You may stay," said the Commander.

The ships came racing nearer: it seemed as if the Spanish ship was getting farther away from the British one; but if the captain did not get the ship into Corunna Bay, he was lost.

Now he must make a sharp turn into Corunna. But the wind, striking the cliff, came out of the Bay and struck the front of the sails just as she turned, and almost threw her onto her stern. Then Hornblower saw an opening in the top sail on the main mast. Then the sail was gone!—blown away. The loss of the sail made it impossible to hold the ship on her course. The wind swung her round.

D. There was still a chance that the ship might reach the entrance to Ferrol Bay. The wind was nearly right for that. Hornblower standing there on the hill was thinking in the same way as the Spanish captain down there on the deck of the ship. He saw him get her on her course so as to reach the narrow entrance well known

among seamen for its difficulty. For a few seconds it looked as if he might succeed. Then the wind struck her again, laying the sails back: it blew the bow of the ship round: it was clear that she was finished. The captain tried to turn and get out to sea, but the wind struck the bow again and the ship went straight onto the long line of the Devil's Teeth.

A wave picked her up as she came near it; then she struck the rocks and the waves broke all around her. When the water went back she lay there with her three masts gone. Her speed and the wave behind her had carried her almost over the rocks. She hung there by the stern which stood out clear of the water while the bow was just under the water on the other side of the rocks.

There were men still alive on her. Another wave came and carried the ship on, beyond the rocks so that most of her length was protected by the rocks. Hornblower could see those living men on her deck. They had only a little longer to live—five minutes, or perhaps five hours at most.

All round him the Spaniards were shouting curses. Some of the men were making angry signs at the British ship which, satisfied with the destruction of the Spanish ship, had turned and was going out to sea.

E. It was terrible to see those poor men down there waiting to die. Some larger wave might lift the stern off the rocks, and she would sink; or she would break up and the men would be carried away with the broken pieces.

Something must be done to save them; but no boat could come round by sea past the Devil's Teeth to reach the ship. Then Hornblower thought of another way of saving them. The Commander on his horse was speaking

angrily to an officer of the Spanish navy: the navy officer was spreading out his hands and saying that any attempt would be hopeless. Hornblower went up to the Commander.

"Sir," he said, "let me try to save them."

"What is your plan?"

"We might carry a boat across the hill from the dockyard."

"How would you carry the boat?" asked the Commander.

He could not shout his plan against the wind in his weak Spanish.

"I can show you at the dockyard. I cannot explain. But we must hurry!"

"You want to go to the dockyard?—Get up behind me on my horse."

F. The dockyard was little used now, but Hornblower knew that all he wanted was there. At the dockyard he pointed to a low cart, with very small wheels; it was used for carrying wine, in the round wooden containers called *barrels*, and boxes of meat to the *pier*— the road built out on posts into the water so that a ship could come alongside of it.

"Horses!" said Hornblower. Ten or twelve men made the horses ready to pull the cart.

There were several boats near the pier. It would take only a minute to put ropes under a boat, pull it up out of the water and lower it onto the cart.

Oars and a mast were put in the boat and *balers*, containers for *baling* or throwing water out of the bottom of the boat.

The boat was lowered onto the cart.

"Empty barrels. Small ones!" said Hornblower.

The fishermen understood at once. They climbed up onto the cart and tied twelve empty barrels under the rowers' seats: these would keep the boat from sinking even if it was full of water.

"I want six men," said Hornblower, "—six fishermen who know little boats."

A big man, a fisherman of Galicia, the name of this part of northern Spain, was fixing the barrels in the boat.

"I know which men we need," he said.

He shouted some names, and half a dozen men came forward. It was clear that the big Galician was their captain.

G. "Let's go," said Hornblower, but the Galician stopped him, and said something that Hornblower could not hear. Some of the crowd of men turned away and came running back with a small barrel of water and a box of food. Hornblower was angry with himself for forgetting that the boat might be blown out to sea.

The same thought came to the Commander.

"Remember, sir," he said, "that I have your parole—your promise not to try to escape if the boat goes out to sea."

"You have my parole, sir," said Hornblower—for a few moments he had forgotten that he was a prisoner.

The fishing-boat captain looked at Hornblower, and Hornblower made a sign to show he was ready.

"Let's go!" shouted the captain to the crowd.

The cart moved, with men leading the horses. Other men pulled at the sides or pushed at the back. Hornblower and the captain rode on the cart. They went out of the gate of the dockyard, along the main street of the

little town; then they turned into a steep lane leading up the hill.

At the top of the hill there was a very narrow road leading sideways down to a little sandy bay which Hornblower had remembered in thinking out his plan. He had seen fishermen working with a long net there, and he had thought to himself that it would be a good place for landing men if the British Navy planned an attack against Ferrol.

The wind was blowing fiercely: the sea was white with breaking waves. When they came round the side of the hill they could see the line of the Devil's Teeth and the ship hanging on it. Someone shouted; everyone pushed, and the cart jumped over the stones in its way.

"Slowly! Slowly!" shouted Hornblower. If they broke a wheel at this moment the attempt would end in failure.

H. They went down to the sandy shore of the little bay. The wheels sank into the sand and the horses stopped at the water's edge. They took out the horses and pushed the cart into the water. The fishermen pushed the boat off the cart into the water and got into it. They seized the oars and pulled. The Galician captain steered using an oar in the stern. Hornblower made signs to the captain showing him which way to go. The boat had to be turned to meet each wave with its bow and then turned back to gain a few yards against the wind; but they were getting nearer to the ship. Hornblower could see the whole of the deck as the ship lay on its side. He could see some men there.

As they came near the ship they were so close to the Devil's Teeth that, as each wave broke over the rocks, some water came up into the boat. There was water inches

deep flowing to and fro; but there was no time to bale it out.

This was the most difficult part of the whole attempt—to get close enough to the side of the ship so as to take off the men without striking the rocks. There were rocks all along the stern of the ship, but the bows were under water. The ship lay over on its side towards them: this made things easier. When the water was at its lowest, just before the next wave came, Hornblower could see no rocks in the middle part of the ship where the deck came down very near to the water. He told the captain to steer to that part and he waved his arms to the men on the ship and pointed to it.

I. A wave broke over the stern of the ship and nearly filled the boat with water, but the barrels kept her from sinking.

"Now!" shouted Hornblower. The boat came forward and the men came down the deck towards them. There were only four men!Twenty or thirty others had been carried away by the sea. One man threw himself into the bow of the boat. The boat came forward again and another jumped into it. Then Hornblower saw another wave coming: the boat backed away to safety. The other two men climbed back up the deck. The wave passed and the boat came up to the ship again. The third man jumped, but fell into the sea and no one ever saw him again. The fourth man jumped and came down safely in the bow of the boat.

"Any more?" shouted Hornblower. The man shook his head.

"Let's go," said Hornblower. They had saved three lives, but it might have been at the cost of eight.

One man threw himself into the bow of the boat

The wind carried the boat away from the ship, away from the rocks—and away from the shore. The rowers gave a pull now and again to keep the boat towards the wind and the waves.

Hornblower looked at the three men lying in the bottom of the boat with the water washing over them. He picked up the balers and pressed them into their hands. They must keep active or die.

J. He asked himself, "Now, what must I do next?"

The rowers were too tired to do much more. They could not get back to the sandy bay before night and in the darkness they might strike a rock.

The Galician captain said, "It is becoming dark. There are rocks. The men are tired."

"We had better not go back," said Hornblower.

"No."

"Then we must go out to sea. We must have sea-room: we must have space all round us so that we may not be blown onto the shore."

The coast here curved away from them and the wind was going round towards the south, carrying the boat out to sea. They could use a sea-anchor to keep the bows pointing towards the waves and so wait safely until daylight.

Hornblower made signs to the captain, who quickly understood what he meant. He shouted at the two men sitting forward, in the front of the boat, and they set to work making a sea-anchor. They tied two oars to a long rope which they let down into the water. The pressure of the wind on the boat would pull on the oars in the water and keep the bow pointing out to sea.

Two of the men saved from the ship had baled out

most of the water and as a result of the work they were in a better state. The third man was lying helpless at Hornblower's feet and the Galician captain was lifting him up in his arms. The men who had been rowing sat still on their seats, completely tired out. Then they all moved close together in the bottom of the boat, trying to get away from the cold wind. Night came. Hornblower welcomed the feeling of other living bodies touching him. He felt an arm round him and he put his arm round someone else.

The boat stood first on her head and then on her tail as the waves passed under her; and, as she came to the top of each wave, she gave a sudden pull on her sea-anchor. Water was blown into the boat and, after a time, they had to start baling again. Then they crowded together again as before.

K. When they pulled themselves together after the third baling, Hornblower felt a change in the body across which his arm was lying. The man had died as he lay between the captain and Hornblower. The captain pulled the body away to the stern in the darkness.

At last the darkness became less. The grey light of day came slowly over the grey sea, and they began to wonder what they should do next.

As the light became stronger one of the fishermen raised himself up in the boat and gave a cry. He pointed to the north, and there was a ship.

The captain looked. "A British warship," he said.

Hornblower took off his shirt; they tied it to an oar and raised it.

Hornblower was terribly cold. The captain saw him putting on his wet coat on his ice-cold body, now that

he had lost his shirt. The captain took off his warm one and offered it to Hornblower.

"Thank you, no," said Hornblower. But the captain made him take it and pointed to the dead man lying in the stern: "He will not need any clothing now. I will use his."

There was a cry from one of the fishermen. The British ship was coming towards them. The wind was now less strong. The ship came nearer. Hornblower could see faces looking down on them. A boat was lowered. A rope was passed from the ship and tied to the Spanish boat. Another rope was thrown with two rings on it to hold a man's legs. The English seamen helped the Spaniards one by one into the rings of the second rope in which they were carried up into the warship.

"I go last," said Hornblower. "I am an officer in the British Navy."

L. At last Hornblower reached the deck.

"Well! Here you are, quite safe, my good fellow," said a seaman with a big beard.

"I am a King's officer," said Hornblower.

Soon Hornblower, wearing dry clothes, was enjoying a hot drink in the cabin of Captain George Crome.

"These fishermen are good seamen," said Captain Crome. "Perhaps some will be willing to serve in our ships rather than go to a prison."

"Sir," said Hornblower, and stopped. It is not good for a lieutenant to correct a captain.

"Well?"

"Sir, those men came to sea to save life. They may not be taken as prisoners."

"Are you telling me my duty?"

"No, sir; but that is one of the rules of the British Navy. You will find it in the book."

"I will consider it. And now what shall I do about you? You say that you are a lieutenant. You can do duty in this ship, and after that I suppose you will go back to the Fearless."

Hornblower thought, "How wonderful it would be to be in a King's ship again, to eat English food, to have a ship's deck under my feet, to talk English—to be free! To be free! I have only to keep silence for a day or two. But . . . But . . ."

He met Crome's eyes.

"I am sorry, sir."

"Sorry? For what?"

"I am here on parole. I promised before I left the shore, that I would not try to escape. I must go back."

The Captain understood: a parole cannot be broken. Honour would not allow that.

"Well," he said at last, "you can have dinner and sleep on board this ship tonight. I'll send you in to Corunna under a white flag as soon as I can. And I'll see what the book says about those prisoners."

M. It was a sunny morning when the man on watch at the Fort San Anton at Corunna called his officer and pointed to a British warship lying out of gun-shot. A boat was being lowered. It came in carrying a white flag. The officer shouted and someone stood up in the boat and answered in Spanish. Ten men were put on shore. Nine of them were laughing and shouting; the tenth, the youngest, walked with no sign of feeling on his face. His expression did not change even when the others put their arms round his shoulders in the most friendly way.

It was spring when a Spanish army-officer came into the officers' prison in Ferrol.

"Senor Hornblower?"

"Yes."

"Please come with me. The Commander has sent for you."

The Commander was smiling. He held a letter in his hand.

"This, sir," he said, "is an order from the Duke of Alcudia, who is head of our government."

"Yes, sir."

"It is an order to me to set you free immediately and send you back to your fellow-countrymen, and to thank you for your courage in saving life even at the danger and possible cost of your own."

"Thank you, sir," said Hornblower.

QUESTIONS

H = Hornblower

1. A. 1. When does the action of this story take place?
2. What was one reason why sea power was very important for both France and Britain?
3. What ship did H join?
4. What was the name of her captain?

B. 1. Why was Captain Pellew in a hurry to take the next supply-ship?
2. Where did the first shot hit the French ship?
3. What did the second shot hit?

C. 1. How many sailors were there on the French ship?
2. How many men did H take?
3. What did Soames give to H?

D. 1. Who chose the men to go with H?
2. What two things did the officer tell H he must do? 1. Keep ———, 2. Watch———.
3. What happened to H when the ship rolled?

E. 1. What were the French seamen doing?
2. Why was H's pistol useless?
3. Who turned back and spoke to H?
4. What did H do to the bottles?

F. 1. What did H do at the wheel? "He—1—; then he—2—."
2. Whom did H order to deal with the yard and rigging?
3. How far was it to England?

G. 1. How many cabins were there?
2. What did Matthews ask? "Can I———?"
3. How many pistols had H when he came up from the captain's cabin?

H. 1. What does 'set a course' mean?
2. What three things did H know he must do when night came?
1. Shut———, 2. Put— 3. Light———.
3. What good advice did Hunter give to H?

I. 1. What did H suddenly remember he must find out? "If water was———, and if there was water in———.
2. Was the iron bar wet or dry?
3. Why did Matthews call H? "Because the wind had——— and was———."

J. 1. What could the ship not do with the wind in its present direction?
2. What did H have to do?
3. What did the French captain say about the movement of the ship?

K. 1. How does rice behave in water?
2. Where was the shot-hole?
3. How was the ship lying when the shot hit her?
4. What did H say they must pull up against the hole?

L. 1. What did H notice down below?
2. What did the Frenchman point to?
3. How much bigger does rice become in water?

M. 1. Why did H go over the side?
2. In what direction did H turn the ship?
3. Where did the captain want the ship to go?
4. What did H tell Matthews to do?

N. 1. What had the rice done to the ship's sides?
2. At what did Matthews point?
3. What was the last thing H could do?

O. 1. What did Matthews say?
2. What did H order Matthews to do?
3. How many men would there be in the boat?

P. 1. Who left the ship last?
2. Who steered the boat?
3. Why were there tears in H's eyes?

2. A. 1. What change was there in the direction of the wind?
2. What did H order Matthews to do?
3. In what direction was the boat going?
4. What did H forget to do?

B. 1. Why did H refuse to let the Frenchmen land at Bordeaux?
2. What did H remember just in time?
3. What did they see at midday next day?

C. 1. What is a privateer? "A ship which does not——— but is allowed to———"
2. What was the name of the French ship?
3. What did Neuville, the captain of the privateer, lend H?

D. 1. What were the "prizes" that the French ship was searching for?
2. How old was H?
3. Where was the ship seen by the look-out man?
4. What did the ship do?
5. What was the name of the other ship?

E. 1. Why did H have no hope of joining the Fearless?
2. To what did the other door in H's cabin lead?
3. What is straw?
4. What did H pour onto the straw and paper?

F. 1. What did H see coming up from below?
2. There was a great store of *(of what?)* below.
3. What is a sky-light?
4. What was just below the cabin?

G. 1. Where was the fire blown after the ship had been turned?
2. Where did the Fearless stop?
3. Which part of the Pique had been burnt?

H. 1. Did Captain Pellew blame H for the loss of the Marie Galante?
2. How soon would the Pique have been out of sight?
3. What did Captain Pellew ask about the fire?
4. Why did H say that the fire had started "by chance"?

3. A. 1. What time of year was it?
2. Why did H go up to the mizzen-top?
3. Who came up to the mizzen-top?
4. What did this man look up at?

B. 1. Who has come back to the maintop?
2. How did Bolton know that the other ship was French?
3. Where was H?
4. What sort of gun was there in the mizzen-top?

C. 1. What was Finch carrying up?
2. Why did H say "Stop that, Finch"?
3. Who were in the mizzen-top of the French ship?
4. What calm words did H say when the Frenchmen fired at them?

D. 1. Who did H hit when he fired the swivel gun?
2. What did the mizzen-top catch as it fell?
3. What must H and Finch do?

E. 1. What did H say that finally made Finch jump?
2. What helped H to get onto the yard?
3. What did Bracegirdle call H?

4. A. 1. Where was the Fearless?
2. What kind of boat was coming towards the Fearless?
3. What did the letter say?
4. How soon must the Fearless leave the bay?

B. 1. Why did H. cry out in surprise?
2. What guns did each galley carry?
3. When could the galleys knock a sailing ship to pieces?
4. How many seamen and officers were there in a galley?
5. What made the galleys turn back?

C. 1. What had Pellew and the supply-ship to do?
2. How were the ships being moved?
3. How many supply-ships were there?
4. What were the men ordered to take with them in the boats?

D. 1. Where did one of the galleys suddenly appear?
2. Whose boat aimed a gun at the galley?
3. What did the galley do to the boat?

E. 1. With what did Jackson catch the galley?
2. How many Spaniards appeared at the stern of the galley?
3. How many of H's men fell in the bottom of the boat?

F. 1. What was there below the stern deck of the galley? "A——— with a———."
2. How did H get into the galley?
3. Who was the overseer?
4. Were there enough men for the two big guns?

G. 1. How many men were standing on the stern deck?
2. Whom did Jackson strike?
3. Where were the rest of the Spaniards? How many?

H. 1. What did Oldroyd want to do?
2. Why was the white line behind the galley curved?
3. Why did the galley turn slowly?

I. 1. Why could Bromley not come on board the galley?
2. What did H order the Spaniards to do?
3. To whom did H speak when they had done this?

J. 1. Where was Mr. Chadd's boat?
2. Why did H feel he must "talk naturally" to Jackson while waiting for Mr. Chadd?
3. What did H remember to do when he reported to Captain Pellew?
4. In whose place will H be placed as an officer?

5. A. 1. What did H have to do before he can become a real lieutenant?
2. Where was the Fearless going?
3. What was going to take place the next day?

B. 1. How was the Santa Barbara used in war-time?
2. Why was Foster rightly named Dread-nought?
3. Did the first man pass the exam?

C. 1. What sort of night was it?
2. The examiner said "You are in serious trouble". What trouble, according to the examiner, was H in? "You are ———and you are———."
3. What did they hear?
4. What did they see?

D. 1. What did Hammond shout to the shore-boat?
2. What was the small fire-ship going to do?
3. What did the captains decide they ought to do?
4. Under what part of the fire-ship will the boat be steered?

E. 1. Where was the wind?
2. Where did the fire-ship pass? "Along———."
3. Where did Foster want to take the fire-ship?

F. 1. Why did the wheel turn freely?
2. What did Foster and H do?
3. Could H and Foster swim?
4. What did H try to take off?

G. 1. Where had the Spaniards come from?
2. What was the "dark shape" that could be seen in the night?
3. What did the Spaniards try to do to one of the other boats?

H. 1. Who jumped on to the Spanish boat?
2. Why were the Spanish prisoners sent back to Spain as free men?
3. What saved H in the examination?
4. What advice did Foster give H?

6. A. 1. What was La Rêve?
2. Why did H have to report to the Admiral?
3. What are despatches?
4. Where was H ordered to go?

B. 1. What did the other letter ask H to do?
2. What was Sir Hew?
3. How did the Duchess speak?
4. The Duchess said to H, "You look like———." Like what?

C. 1. Where did H sit at the table?
2. Whom will H take on his ship?
3. Who was the Duchess's first husband?
4. From what country had the Duchess escaped?

D. 1. What did the Duchess do with her knife? Why?
2. What did Sir Hew say about the enemy? "May their———."
3. The captain said, "I wish to add to that." What did he add?

E. 1. What guns had H's ship?
2. Where did H's only safety lie? "In his———."
3. How many seamen had he?
4. Whom did the Duchess bring with her?
5. What did the officer hand to H?

F. 1. What is a fog?
2. H said, "We must go———." Go where?
3. What did Hunter hear on the ship close to them?

G. 1. What might the other ship be?
2. How did Hunter know that they were in the middle of a lot of ships?
3. What did the Spaniards always do at night?
4. Were the Spaniards on a different course from H? How did H know?

H. 1. What ship was sailing along close to them?
2. Why might the Spaniards think that Le Rêve might have come with them from Cadiz?
3. What did H bring up from below?

I. 1. What did H begin to do to the despatches?
2. Where did the Duchess put the despatches? "one—and the other—."
3. What might the Spaniards think? (The book does not say exactly, but guess.)

J. 1. Where did the first shot strike the water?
2. How far away was the battle-ship in front?
3. What stopped La Rêve?

K. 1. What was the real name of the Duchess?
2. What was she five years ago?
3. Why did she choose the name Wharfdale?

L. 1. How soon would the Duchess deliver the despatches?
2. What used the Duchess to do, but promised she would not do any more?
3. How did the Spanish officer greet the Duchess?
4. What was the noise that H could hear?

7. A. 1. After how long did Kitty Cobham's letter come?
2. What does one of the admirals hold?
3. Why did the admiral ask Mr Sheridan to give Kitty a part in his next play?
4. What part was it? Was Kitty successful?

B. 1. Why was H made a lieutenant?
2. What difference did this make to his living conditions?
3. What does 'give your parole' mean?
4. For how long may H go out of the camp each day?

C. 1. When did H spend his two hours of freedom?
2. Then came the———. What?
3. For how long had H been a prisoner now?

8. A. 1. What was the name of the line of rocks in Ferrol Bay?
2. What is a dockyard?
3. Where was the ship that the Spaniards were watching trying to go?

B. 1. What would a careful captain do?
2. Why would a Spanish ship not do this?
3. What was the other ship? What was she doing?

C. 1. How far behind was the British ship?
2. What did H ask the Commander?
3. What happened to the Spanish ship just as she turned toward Corunna?

D. 1. How did the ship lie on the rocks? "The stern———, while the bow was———."
2. Where did the next wave carry the ship?
3. What did the British ship do?

E. 1. Why did it at first seem impossible to save the men on the sinking ship?
2. What did H say that they might do?
3. Why could H not explain his plan until he got to the dockyard?
4. How did H go to the dockyard?

F. 1. What was the cart used for?
2. What is a pier?
3. What are balers used for?
4. Where were the empty barrels tied?
5. How many men did H need?

G. 1. What do you think the Galician captain said to the crowd of men?
2. What had H forgotten? "That the boat might———."
3. What did the Commander tell H not to forget?
4. Where did the narrow road lead?
5. What was H afraid might happen if the cart went too fast?

H. 1. Why had the boat to be turned often? How did it make progress?

2. What was the most difficult part of the attempt? "To——— ship so as to———without."
3. How was the ship lying?
4. To which part of the ship was the boat steered?

I. 1. How many men were there on the ship?
2. What happened to the third man?
3. What did H make the men do to keep them active?

J. 1. Why did H say they must go out to sea?
2. How is a sea-anchor made?
3. What was the Galician captain doing to one of the men?
4. How did they all try to keep warm?

K. 1. What happened to the man who lay between H and the captain?
2. What did they see at day-light?
3. What did H use as a flag?
4. How were the men pulled up into the ship? "By a rope with ———."

L. 1. Why could the Spaniards not be made prisoners?
2. Why could H not stay on the British ship?
3. Where did the Captain say he would send H?

M. 1. What was the boat carrying as it came in?
2. How many men were put on shore?
3. From whom was the letter that the Commander had received? "From the———of the———."
4. What did the letter order the Commander to do?
5. What did the letter tell the Commander to say to H?

LIST OF EXTRA WORDS

admiral	4J
ahoy	5F
aye aye	1C
bale (v), baler	8F
belaying pin	6I
bow(s)	1B
cabin	1G
calm, in a calm	4B
cleat	4E
cock (v)	2A
compass	1J
curve(d)	4H
cutlass	4C
deck	1D
despatch(es)	6A
dismast(ed)	5C
dockyard	8A
dread(v)	5B
fog	6F
galley	4B
grapnel	4E
lieutenant	5A
mast	1B
main mast	3A
mizzen mast	3A
mate(n)	2A
midshipman	1A
navy	1A
neutral (ground)	5E
nought	5B
oar (s)	4B
overseer	4F
parole	7B
pier	8F
privateer	2C
prize (= ship)	2D
prow	1P
pump	1I
rail	4E
rice	1K
rigging	1F
seamanship	2C
set (a course)	1H
sky-light	2F
steer	1F
stern	1D
straw	2E
swivel (gun)	3B
telescope	2E
tiller	4D
top	3A
main top	3A
mizzen-top	3A
waterline	1B
windward (side)	2D
yard(s)	1B

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